

The Christian Scholar

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The Christian Religion

By the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. Pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City.

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The Editor's Preface

This issue of *The Christian Scholar* is devoted to the attempt to discover the various implicit presuppositions which are operative in American life and to evaluate these in the light and from the standpoint of Christian faith. This effort is made through descriptions of a number of aspects of "the American character." Despite the illumination which a number of mirrors — literature, politics, heroism, and higher education itself — provide us, the effort which is made is beset with almost insurmountable difficulties. Perhaps the best and the most accurate generalization which can be made only underscores the great, and often the rich, diversity of American life. The operative principles can be delineated accurately only if we arrange them in pairs of opposites. Absurd inconsistencies are present when we take these into account: aggressive individualism and the desire to conform; the love of bigness and the fear of bigness in government or in business; the lack of class consciousness and the love of luxury; the respect for simplicity and the need for conspicuous display; the love of the new and the veneration of the old. These and many other assumptions are present side-by-side in American life. They defy an easy analysis of the typical American; they make difficult a simple outline of "the way of life" which is so often referred to as distinctively American.

The attempt that is made here is, however, not the attempt to be synthetic, but rather to explore the various divergencies which are, in actuality, present. Moreover, it is to the relationships which may be seen between

the American tradition and Christianity that primary attention is given. Thus, the discussions of various prominent figures in American literature are devoted largely to the way in which even a somewhat hidden religious concern is presented in their writings. In the roles which they hold with reference to the American tradition, they are writers who reveal both the inconsistencies and the productiveness of which they are capable at the point of a capacity for self-criticism. Here the challenges are presented in terms often of thesis and antithesis, resulting in a creative dialectic. Like the better politician, the theologian, and the historian, the writer often sees through the self-righteousness and the complacency of a too simple perspective, and he achieves a standpoint of deeper realism from which to judge our common life. When an analysis is made which cuts through the profusion of values so that they may be criticized and transformed into a pattern of meaning, the best hope within the American tradition is made apparent. It is found in the perennial capacity for self-criticism. Because both the challenge and the hope are called for in the contemporary situation, the point of focus for this issue can at the same time be a significant step for the communities which are engaged in higher education.

It is not inappropriate for *The Christian Scholar* to give the American tradition its attention and to view it from distinctly Christian affirmations. American democratic society has a great deal of its strength and vitality in a transcendent referent which provides both its

judgment and a portion of its true meaning. This tradition has its religious presuppositions, even if they are not always explicit. These are derived, moreover, from the biblical tradition which forms the core of the Hebraic and Christian perspective on life. In the basic convictions of the Bible—convictions concerning God and man, the nature of true community, concern for social justice and equality, and the inseparability of freedom and responsibility, as well as others—the tradition of American democratic society has its roots. As Americans, we are prone always to an oversimple idealism which provides the "values" which we then expect to be expressed in public life. But, frequently we engage in "the mischief of values", when we are blinded to the complexity of the relation between our ideals and social reality as it is. However valid they may be, values and ideals do not in themselves constitute religious faith. In addition to idealism, we are challenged to accept a realism concerning the limitations and the perversities of man, even as he devotes himself to the realization of lofty values. Thus, a transcendent standpoint of self-criticism and judgment is needed for the preservation and regeneration of democratic society. This is called for if society would remain "open" and creative.

The transcendent referent is at the same time the basis of the hope that there may be a fulfillment, however approximate, beyond the frustrations and defeats which surround each of us. It is in such a hope that the contemporary conflict may be seen, through "the eyes of faith", as essentially a conflict

at the religious level, a divergence in basic attitudes about the nature and meaning of our human life. Today, Soviet Communism and the basis of the American tradition confront each other at the fundamental level of different conceptions of man's nature and his work in the world, of the responsibility of men in society, and of the relation of men to God. The hope which we find in the insight and understanding which is given by the religious tradition grounded in the Bible was poignantly expressed by Will Herberg at the National Conference on the Spiritual Foundations of American Democracy which was held in Washington on November 8-10, 1954. In his address on "The Biblical Basis of American Democracy", Mr. Herberg pointed out that democracy's claim consists in two points: "(1) an underlying allegiance to genuinely human values, which totalitarianism either explicitly repudiates or cynically perverts; and (2) a built-in principle of self-limitation, self-criticism, and self-reform, the like of which no totalitarian regime can possess or tolerate."¹

The challenge today is at a basic level. And a basic thinking-through and living-out of the underlying foundations of the American tradition are called for. The responsible examination of our foundations and a full rededication of what is enduring in them is urgently needed today. At the same time, such an engagement of thought and commitment can provide the basis of both realistic idealism and enduring hope. It is to such an end as this that we dedicate this issue.

¹Will Herberg, "The Biblical Basis of American Democracy," *Thought*, Vol. XXX, No. 116, Spring, 1955.

Like Unto Our Heroes

KERMIT EBY AND JUNE GREENLIEF



S CARLYLE POINTED OUT, men need heroes. And if they do not have good heroes, they will follow bad ones. A Gandhi and a Hitler are, in that sense, equals in the scale of history, for they both fill the need of man to follow, emulate, to shout with the passion of conviction.

The true aim of any given society is to survive, and following survival, to secure cultural self-perpetuation. To that end, a society must produce or manufacture heroes who will serve its aims. If the society is (as Western society was at the beginning of the Industrial Revolution) in need of men to produce goods and more goods, then the values will be work values and the heroes work heroes. Thus our homegrown American myth-men are super-productive men like Paul Bunyan and John Henry. John Henry could drive more steel and Paul Bunyan could cut down more forests than any man alive. And Casey Jones drove absolutely the best steam engine.

The myth-man is an outsize representation of the hero, and the hero a more than life-size representation of the actual human being. Beowulf, starting as a man, became a hero, and ended as a myth. The dragons he slew were symbols of Anglo-Saxon man's collective fears: sloth, deprivation, the threat of starvation, force absolutely untrammelled by law. Beowulf's dragon is none other than the ghoul which always sits glowering and half-hidden beneath the table of civilization, ready to overturn it and appear again in the light of day whenever too many people get careless. Men eat at the table of civilization, always aware that the ghoul watches them from beneath, bearing in his hands all the varied ugliness of barbarism. And the most terrible thing about the ghoul is that he sits, in actuality, deep and hidden in the heart of man. Quite often, as at Dachau and Buchenwald, he comes forth full blown, in all primeval slime.

Thus each generation invents its own heroes to slay the same old dragon which appears and reappears in new forms. And each generation must look to the training of its children in the way that they must go in order to be socially useful. The simplest training—the training that sticks longest—is given by example, by the laying out of patterns for the child to follow, by the presentation daily of custom and habit.

The hero is a useful tool in this training, because the hero carries all the main threads of pattern and custom within himself. He is a walking incubation of the virtues which a society desires its children to emulate. George Washington the man has long been forgotten in the overlying cast of George Washington the hero. What becomes important to the teacher of grade-school history is that George Washington is attributed to have always and everywhere told the truth. It is immaterial to the grade school teacher that a careful and unbiased reading of the life of George Washington might point out certain strays from the path of

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pure virtue. What matters to the teacher is that the children should see the large shadow of truth cast long against the walls, and that they should never, given allowance for all human frailty, be able to forget the shadow.

But the shadow is more difficult to throw against the wall for an American child than for others, born into more homogeneous cultures.

"The principal responsibility that rested upon parents," Dr. A. Cohen tells us in *Everyman's Talmud*, "was to train their children for their life as members of the Community of Israel. The ideal aimed at was to forge them into secure links in the chain of continuity so that the religious heritage which had been bequeathed by the preceding generation might be transmitted unimpaired to the generations which would follow. The indispensable requisite for such a consummation was the instilling into them of a knowledge of Torah."

The Torah was the unilateral Way, the life, the tree of knowledge. It was the book of heroes, and of heroic acts, around which an entire culture might knit itself. It was the refuge against persecution and pain; more, it was a handbook concerning the variety of ways in which a man, searching for uprightness and the good life, might learn the world and conduct his affairs.

In America, there is no Torah for the public school child. In the American home there is still, of course, the Bible. But the Bible has not for a long time now been The Book for an entire culture. So unbelieving is America, even in the official sense of statistically counted church membership, that various groups, both Protestant and Catholic, send out missionaries to their neighbors as once to the traditional poor heathen.

There is no real chain of continuity in America. America, the famed "melting pot," is in actuality no melting pot at all, because there is no primary culture into which the Slav, the Pole, the Jew, the Negro—and especially the Negro—can melt. Or rather, there is no primary pattern which any minority can melt into (presupposing that they are allowed to melt at all) without losing something in favor of something considerably less. What any minority man who succeeds in melting seems to lose is a kind of uniqueness, a color all his own. What he gains is most usually the attribute of colorlessness, a membership in the local Rotarian club, and a voice speaking the same patriotic or businesslike phrases as those of a thousand other voices around him.

Because the only factor which ties all Americans together is not a cultural but an ideological one, nationalism. Nationalism, and a word which has come to be used interchangeably in America with patriotism (and which has come, in addition to mean all things to all men): democracy. Now democracy, of all the political systems as yet in use, is the most subtle and the most complicated. It demands the ability to compromise and the ability to see many issues at once. Understood correctly it means a system of diffused power spread in interrelated fashion over a jigsaw of pressure groups.

Thus the ideal democratic hero is a man much more cautious about drawing his sword against dragons, for the dragon may have some good in him after all

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(and further, the dragon might represent a significant pressure group). On the other hand, the ideal democratic hero must have a deep face of conviction, a principle in mind (for otherwise he would be no hero at all, but an opportunist). The ideal democratic hero must, as F. Scott Fitzgerald succinctly phrased it, "hold two opposed ideas in his mind at once." The ideal democratic hero might very well be a combination of Huck Finn (that precise blend of suspicion of humanity and love of humanity), Will Rogers (who used the mother-wit of his suspicion to create the folk-wit of love), Franklin Delano Roosevelt (who betrayed his patrician ancestry by becoming a politician), and Henry Adams (who bemoaned the fact that all his life his patrician upbringing gave him too much mother-wit to be useful in politics).

No such hero, of course, has appeared upon the scene. The actual and official hero is a man with a Rotarian heart and the face of George Washington. Of this hero it is demanded that he absorb all colors and all cultures, so that in the end he has no color and no culture at all. His emotional tone is perhaps dominantly middle class (because it is to a large extent the middle class in this country which, though not necessarily wanting to *include* all races, religions, and cultures, nevertheless wistfully desires to *make over* all races, religions, and cultures into its own image).

It may be the very vague and yet exclusive neutrality of this emotional tone which accounts in large part for the distinct change in the traditional attitude of the present older generation in regard to the present younger generation. It has been noted before that there is much less thunder about "what the younger generation is coming to," and much more wonder about what it is not coming to. It is middle-aged men who call the younger group "The Silent Generation." And even with the various purges of educators, college professors still note with some surprise that they are more radical, more ready to take a chance, more ready to explore possibilities, than the great majority of their students. And the chief characteristic about The Silent Generation seems to be the fact that among them it is held to be a positive virtue to blow neither hot nor cold about everything. That is, not to become hot or cold about anything. Thus, the sorority girl dates the fraternity wheel, with the express notion in both of their minds not to "get involved" up to the point of marriage, at which time it is probably best to get married and continue in this state with as little involvement as possible. Such people might have at one time been called "cold"; they are now dubbed "stable." The Silent Generation seems to have taken too seriously and too young the parental admonitions to settle down, be cautious, and not get into trouble—a series of negatives which, if they were really to become the dominant emotional tone of society, would succeed in making that society as static as a Pharaoh's tomb.

Suspicion is, of course, not the only nor the dominant tone. There are too many Americans for the Rotarian businessman with the George Washington face really to swallow up in homogeneous colorlessness. There are too many Americans, actually, for the public school teacher even to attempt to forge her children and

adolescents into secure links in the chain of continuity. (For there is no chain of continuity, nor is there a single unilateral book such as the Talmud to give an exact tone and precise positive depth.) The public school teacher has, at most, to start with, an American flag (which cannot be accepted by the children of Jehovah's Witnesses), a picture of George Washington (which may be disavowed by those Negro children who are aware that Washington owned slaves and was not necessarily in the habit of treating them well). The public school teacher may also have a picture of Sir Galahad and of *The Gleaner*.

What the public school teacher does have to start with, in addition, of course, is the Textbook. In lieu of a homogeneous culture, in fear of any religious content which might offend any sect whatsoever, the teacher turns to the Textbook. The Textbook will tell her how to teach cultural do's and don't's without philosophic curiosity of moral backing; the Textbook will tell her how to teach a distilled and anemic brand of kindness as a substitute for religion; it will teach her, in short, how to teach morals in a moral vacuum.

In lieu of cultural continuity, then, there is a patchwork of half-digested ideas, outright half-truths, and profound inconsistencies which is most often labeled "Americanism." The child must be taught at one and the same time that it is good to be friendly and good to be successful; good to better himself and good to be kind; good to be cooperative and good to be competitive. Meanwhile, of course, the child's heroes lie in a different sphere, with those cowboys and sharpshooters who indeed, in no uncertain way, know good from evil, who slay their dragons daily and with no compunction, for good is good and evil is evil. The neither-good-nor-evil is that young or old woman who stands before her classes each day and communicates to them whatever she can from her own cultural heritage (which with many school-teachers seems to lie no deeper than a preference for people who bathe every day, or the idea that the most important thing in life is "to get along with people," "be friendly," and continue in the way of the innocuous).

Meanwhile, on a real level, the American child learns daily that his survival in the actual world depends upon knowing not only good from evil, but the good from the bad, the first rate from the third rate. If he goes into adulthood with no better philosophic base than the patchwork of "Americanism" (as many do), he may live out his life on the American scene utterly insensitive to the thousand cultural pressures around him, and certainly insensitive to the dark and tangled threads which compose goodness-badness, the springs of human motivation.

I once had a bright and sensitive student from Gary, a Negro, who decided to study the effect of public school education on the Negro community in Gary. To do this he equipped himself with a wire recorder and went back to Gary, settling himself down in bars and hotels, in meeting places and on street corners. The record of the sometimes aimless, sometimes forthright conversations he brought back showed clearly one thing: none of the people to whom he talked were prepared for life in America as life in America really is. The majority of the

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people he talked to were factory workers. Their education, which seemed to have been directly oriented in terms of middle class values, had inculcated all of them with the vague idea that anyone worth his salt becomes a lawyer, a doctor, a dentist, a "writer," or a schoolteacher. (Or a small businessman, if not a corporate executive.) They had also been taught the public school fallacy (which is usually coupled with the story about George Washington), i.e., that any man who wants to can become President. Few of them had wanted to become President; all of them had dreamed of becoming independent professionally or businesswise.

In the maw of economic necessity, the necessity to keep wives and support children, pay bills and see doctors, the false dreams soon faded. And no real dreams took their place. Their suspicion of humanity won out over their love of humanity.

They became men without heroes, and the official hero which was given them to emulate came not from their own loins, but from people living in a condition quite different from their own. So far as we know, from the heart of the medieval knight there sprang no heroes either, for the medieval hero in official form was a warrior-knight who, in order to slay his dragons, had to be perched in the first place on the upper one-tenth of the society ladder. The majority of men who labor are aware that they are without swords, and the dragons (even if a man had the surplus energy to kill them) are too big—as big as a monopoly or a cartel.

Where, then, is our democratic hero? We have, indeed, our official mythman, the Rotarian with the George Washington face, clean and well-bathed, colorless and sentimental. But he seems to inspire no one, since he is never seen slaying a dragon (unless it is the vague dragon of un-Americanism, that dragon which is all things to all men, depending upon what sort of American you are and what sort of an image you would prefer other men to be created in).


Much more representative as an American myth-man is not our good Rotarian at all, but the fallen Rotarian, Willie Loman. For Willie Loman, like the Gary factory workers denuded of their dreams, also got tripped up in a double minded value system which attempted to make him moral without believing in morality. Willie Loman sincerely wanted to be *good*; he believed that he should "get ahead" and at the same time be "well-liked." He would genuinely like to have slain dragons, had he been able to recognize one when he saw one.

So that in the end, of course, the values by which he professed to live betrayed him, offering him no sustenance even so broad as an old-age pension.

But perhaps the real tragedy of Willie Loman lies in the fact that his life had been one long sin of omission. It was like the life of that other fallen would-be hero, Peer Gynt, who, at the end of the act, slowly peeling down the onion which symbolizes himself, discovers that, alas, the onion has no heart.

The Protestant Nonpolitical Approach to Politics

ERNEST W. LEFEVER

URING WORLD WAR II the Methodist Board of Missions published and distributed widely a tract by Chiang Kai-Shek, *I Bear My Witness*, which described the Generalissimo and Madame Chiang as "two of the world's outstanding Christians and Methodists," and stated that Chiang's "government has been called one of the most nearly Christian administrations in the world."

Also during World War II a prominent Protestant churchman wrote a *Christian Century* article attacking postwar peace arrangements designed "merely" to prevent war in our time. "The churches," he said, "are not interested in a makeshift peace" of only "twenty-five or fifty years."

Several years ago the temperance magazine of a major Protestant communion carried a laudatory article on Governor J. Strom Thurmond, the Dixiecrat candidate for president in 1948, praising him as an example of a Christian in politics simply because he did not serve liquor in his home. The article made no reference to his position on race, civil liberties, public education, economic policy or foreign affairs.

In the national political campaign of 1952 the executive secretary of the Ohio Council of Churches gave Senator John W. Bricker, who was running for reelection, the use of the Council's mailing list of several thousand selected lay and clerical churchmen. The Senator sent to each person a strong letter setting forth his record on behalf of "religious liberty." Mr. Bricker represented his proposed Constitutional amendment to curb the President's treaty-making power as a necessary bulwark against those who threaten "religious liberty" by "compromise with Godless and Socialist members of the UN." When the Council secretary was asked why he had made the mailing lists available to a Senator whose voting record frequently ran counter to Protestant pronouncements on national and foreign affairs, he replied that it was the Council's policy to give its lists to any candidate who was not supported by liquor and gambling interests.

These four, somewhat dramatic but typical, examples of Protestant "non-political" political behavior will serve to introduce my topic and to illustrate my thesis. My topic is the Protestant nonpolitical approach to politics and my thesis is that this approach is politically irrelevant and morally irresponsible and that it denies the Biblical understanding of man. For the past half century the non-

Ernest W. Lefever is now writing his Ph.D. dissertation, "Protestants and U. S. Foreign Policy: 1925-1954." Until recently he was associate executive director of the National Council of Churches' Department of International Affairs. This article is a revision of a paper presented on September 5, 1954, at the annual Week of Work of the National Council on Religion and Higher Education, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

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political approach has been the dominant approach of the most vocal and socially-concerned Protestant clergy in America. On the wane since the Great Depression, this approach still prevails among a substantial number of "social action" and other Protestant leaders. Not all Protestant leaders are nonpolitical and many non-Protestants are.

THEOLOGICAL AND NON-THEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF THE NONPOLITICAL APPROACH

The Protestant nonpolitical approach has both theological and non-theological roots. First, a word about its theological or philosophical sources. The non-political approach is not synonymous with the Social Gospel Movement which flourished from 1865 to 1915, but it has been influenced by that movement. Like the Social Gospel, it is a Protestant manifestation of several strains of secular and religious thought. Basically it is the child of two nineteenth century movements, secular humanism and religious pietism. It received (via liberal humanism) its confidence in historic progress from the eighteenth century social philosophers who, according to Carl L. Becker, "demolished the Heavenly City of Saint Augustine only to rebuild it with more up-to-date materials." The New City to be built in this world was characterized by liberty, equality and fraternity, and the new building materials were reason, education and goodwill. Like the Social Gospel, the nonpolitical approach was also influenced by social Darwinism, Marxism and other versions of nineteenth century "progress thinking."

Another theological (or is it social?) source of the contemporary nonpolitical approach is nineteenth century Protestant pietism which sanctified private virtues such as thrift, honesty, purity, sobriety and hard work. These individualistic virtues became an important handmaiden of the industrial revolution by sanctioning great concentrations of wealth and the factory system on the one hand, and by providing an escape from social responsibility on the other. John Wesley anticipated the mood of American pietism in these words, "Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can."

There are two non-theological or social sources of the nonpolitical approach to politics. The first is the middle-class socio-economic orientation of American Protestants who represent mainly the earlier, more established northern European immigrant stock. This dominant American cultural group tends to look down upon the newer immigrants from the Catholic countries of southern Europe. These new arrivals who crowded our big cities and had strange religious and social customs didn't appear to exhibit the obvious material fruits of thrift, purity, sobriety and hard work. Some of them had "alien" ideas about the right of labor to organize and the responsibility of the government for social welfare.

The second non-theological ingredient in the nonpolitical approach is the uniquely American confidence that Americans can do anything if they want to badly enough. Charles B. Marshall in his brilliant book, *The Limits of Foreign Policy*,¹

¹Charles B. Marshall, *The Limits of Foreign Policy*, New York: Holt 1954. Pages 18-21.

lists three sources of this faith in American omnipotence: 1) The consciousness of an extraordinarily successful past, 2). An excessive confidence in legislation as a method of social change, and 3) Faith in doing things by engineering and regarding the field of human relations as essentially an aspect of science and amenable to rational manipulation.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NONPOLITICAL APPROACH

The Protestant nonpolitical approach to politics is an ever-changing phenomenon, a product of complex and constantly interacting theological and non-theological forces. It is impossible to outline the characteristics of this approach with precision, although we will attempt to analyze briefly four persistent and interrelated elements in it. It is difficult to say when this approach was most widely accepted among Protestant leaders because it is a constellation of many assumptions, each of which has had its own shifting course between acceptance and rejection. But in general we can say that the momentous events of recent history—the Great Depression, the New Deal, Pearl Harbor and the Cold War—together with a new (for twentieth century Americans) and vigorous interpretation of that history by Reinhold Niebuhr and others—have shattered beyond repair the old liberal Protestant image of politics and world affairs, at least among intellectuals and recent graduates of our theological schools. Nevertheless, a great number of Protestant preachers and bureaucrats are still instructed by the central assumptions of the nonpolitical approach. And not a few Protestant laymen share some of these assumptions. We will outline four interrelated characteristics of this approach, illustrating each from events of recent history, and subjecting each to certain tests of political relevance, moral responsibility, and Biblical orthodoxy.

The nonpolitical approach tends to be: 1) utopian, especially with respect to international politics; 2) individualistic and moralistic; 3) harmonistic; and 4) it seeks to escape the problem of power.

I. NONPOLITICAL PROTESTANTS TEND TO BE UTOPIAN

Many Protestants still long for the earthly Heavenly City of the eighteenth century philosophers, but their dreams have been tempered by the cruel realities of the past three decades. Most of these people have lost their hopes for an ideal commonwealth in America where the conditions for order and justice are perhaps the most propitious in the world, but they have clung frantically to their ideal hopes for the world of nations where the conditions are certainly the least propitious. They may no longer share the optimism of Andrew Carnegie, who in 1910 instructed the trustees of his new Endowment for International Peace as follows: "When . . . war is discarded as disgraceful to civilized men, the Trustees will pleas then consider what is the next most degrading evil or evils whose banishment . . . would most advance the progress, elevation and happiness of man . . . for now we know that man was . . . imbued with the desire and the

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power for improvement to which, perchance, there may be no limit short of perfection even here in this life upon earth." (Mr. Carnegie believed in simplified spelling.) Today many Protestants smile in emancipated retrospect at their innocence in 1928 when they gave all-out support to the Kellogg-Briand Pact for outlawing war, but some of these same persons now refer to the United Nations as the "world's best hope for peace."

They still see the real world in terms of its deviation from an ideal model of a world commonwealth characterized by permanent peace, and ignore the realities of the struggle for security and power among sovereign states. Advocates of "strengthening the United Nations" through revising its charter fail to see that political organizations and laws are reflections of the consensus achieved in society and not the sources of that consensus. The most blatant utopians are the world government people who insist on one giant step as an alternative to grappling with actual foreign policy alternatives.

Utopianism is usually accompanied by the desire for panaceas. Joseph C. Harsh of the *Christian Science Monitor* said recently that the other side of the typical American "urge to peace and humanity, and its sublime confidence that the millennium is achievable, is an almost bottomless susceptibility to the nostrum peddler. There is no one like the American for falling for a gadget which purports to solve all problems." The road from Versailles to Pearl Harbor is strewn with the whitened carcasses of lost causes, crusades to save the world in this generation. Bismarck said that "politics is the art of the possible." A recognition of this fact is the beginning of political wisdom and moral responsibility.

The confusion of what is presumably desirable with what is politically possible, and the confusion of foreign policy goals with the highly limited alternatives for reaching those goals are the by-products of utopian assumptions. To expect too much is a one-way ticket to disillusionment and despair. The line between utopianism and cynicism is very thin and the social effect of the utopian and the cynic is often equally disastrous. The utopian denies the fact of power and self-interest, and the cynic denies the existence of a Reality through whom man can occasionally transcend self-interest. Both are politically irrelevant because they fail to come to grips with the actual alternatives in the inexorable struggle of power and policy. Both deny the Biblical understanding of man and of history. The utopian sees only the possibilities of man, and the cynic sees only his limitations. Neither sees both the limitations and possibilities of man under a God who is Lord of both time and eternity. Reinhold Niebuhr says that "man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."

Someone has said that the "world savers" of the 1920's reached for utopia and gave us hell. Vincent Sheean said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, especially when they know what can and what cannot be done."

2. NONPOLITICAL PROTESTANTS ARE INDIVIDUALISTIC AND MORALISTIC

The individualistic-moralistic perspective which emphasizes private virtues such as purity, sobriety, thrift and piety, and tends to overlook the weightier matters of justice and social welfare, is perhaps the central characteristic of the nonpolitical approach. There is nothing inherently wrong with private virtues, but when they are made the sole guide to political behavior they become vices. Citizens preoccupied with individual virtues fail to come to grips with the fundamental business of politics—choosing between alternative policies for running the community, local, state or national. The “good” candidate is a God-fearing man, hard-working, sober, clean shaven, and without a “foreign” accent. Often the voters are presented with a choice between a) politicians who embody the virtues of sobriety and thrift, but who want to curtail social services for low income people, and b) politicians who drink and occasionally gamble, but who will do something about increasing social services and building needed schools. The choice in this case is between a candidate who is long on private virtues and short on social responsibility, and a candidate who is short on private virtues and long on social responsibility. Many candidates, of course, are short on both counts and many are long on both counts. Nonpolitical Protestants, lay and clerical, make their choice simply in terms of private morality and fail to take into account the position of the candidate on the public issues of justice and security which are at stake.

The 1952 Presidential campaign is instructive at this point. Many Americans got all excited about petty corruption of the mink coat and deep freeze variety and overlooked the basic policy alternatives for governing the country offered by the business-oriented and economy-minded Republicans and the welfare-oriented Democrats. The Madison Avenue advertising experts who merchandised Ike’s “moral crusade” exploited American moralistic individualism to the hilt, finally reducing the campaign to one so-called issue—“the mess in Washington.” The real issues had to do with foreign policy, the relation of private economic groups to government, the trade-tariff question, immigration policy, social security, income-tax policy, economic stability, McCarthyism, the federal loyalty-security program, etc. There is considerable evidence to indicate that for millions of voters the smiling, warm-hearted, pious, simple father image became an easy substitute for the hard job of weighing policy alternatives. Tax scandals and influence peddling are reprehensible and there is no substitute for personal integrity, but the petty corruption of a few politicians is certainly less important than the greater corruption of legally-enacted policies, such as high tariffs, which reward special interests at the expense of the American people and the economy of the free world.

Another closely related product of individualism in politics is illustrated by the slogan, “I like Ike.” It is the assumption that history is somehow made by charismatic individuals. MacArthur could have saved us from the Communists if

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only we had followed his advice. Ike would flush out the Aegean stables by diverting the Potomac. If this savior-on-a-white-charger mentality was a decisive factor in favor of Eisenhower, it should be noted that it was not entirely absent among the supporters of Adlai Stevenson. People who put their faith in heroes always err because they fail to comprehend the complex and powerful vitalities of history—the rise and fall of nations, the struggle of political parties, economic forces, institutions, as well as persons—which shape our destiny. The most important difference between Ike and Adlai was the fact that they were candidates of two different political parties offering different policy alternatives for dealing with the major issues facing America.

The devil-theory of history is cut from the same cloth as the hero-theory. We have all heard of the "Hoover depression," the "Truman War," and that Dean Acheson was responsible for "losing China." Concerning China it is instructive to note that it is not possible to lose something we never had. Both the devil and hero theories deny our common involvement in and responsibility for the destiny of our nation.

Political decisions are made by organized groups and the most important instruments in America for translating the will of the people into public policy are the Democratic and Republican parties. The individualistic voter fails to understand this elementary fact and his political behavior at best is irrelevant and at worst contributes to an unintended social effect. In straining out the gnat of private impurity he swallows the camel of public irresponsibility.

3. NONPOLITICAL PROTESTANTS TRY TO BE NONPARTISAN

The nonpolitical Protestant tries to avoid public controversy like the plague. Participation in public debate, except on clear-cut "moral issues" like gambling and Point Four, is as unbecoming as a family brawl on the village green. The social effect of this premium on harmony can be disastrous. The plea for goodwill or understanding is often a conscious or unconscious escape from the responsibility of facing existing conflicts of interest and of doing something about alternative policies for dealing with these conflicts. Politics is the business of coming to grips with the issues of social conflict and not of eliminating conflict. The problem is to get the right people to disagree with the right people over the right issues and for the right reasons. A genuine recognition of conflict, of who stands for what and why, is the only solid basis for public policy decisions and, incidentally, for mutual respect.

The nonpartisan Protestant wants to avoid taking sides, to remain pure and independent. Taking sides means compromise and compromise is evil. The price of self-righteous independence and harmonistic nonpartisanship is political irrelevance and moral irresponsibility. The political independent has about as much effective relationship to his environment as Carl Sandburg's "hog on ice."

There is no such thing as non-involvement in politics for the adult citizen in America. There is no escape from participation in the policy decisions of our nation. When individuals attempt to remain above the battle they succeed only in participating negatively in the fateful decisions of our time by exerting an accidental and unintended influence on the course of events. Intelligent and purposeful participation in politics, which means taking sides, has a positive and intended effect, although that effect may be modest.

The desire to be right and pure, to witness to a "higher position," often has curious consequences. In 1948 the people who voted for Henry Wallace delivered New York State's 47 electoral votes to Thomas E. Dewey. Recently Norman Thomas said that he "would rather be right than be President, but [he] was perfectly willing to be both."

You can be "pure" or responsible in politics, but you can't be both. And if you remain pure your purity is that of the priest who passed by on the other side. American history is full of examples where the pure of heart have played into the hands of the corrupt, where the children of light have been a present help to the children of darkness. The desire for superficial social harmony and the desire to remain pure lead to irrelevance and ineffectiveness in politics because these desires deny our involvement in and responsibility to the community in which God has placed us.

4. NONPOLITICAL PROTESTANTS SEEK TO ESCAPE THE PROBLEM OF POWER

We have said that nonpolitical Protestants are utopian, individualistic, moralistic and harmonistic in their approach to politics. Another way of saying the same thing is that they fail to come to grips with the essential raw material of politics—power. They fear power and call it evil. They shrink from participation in powerful organizations which take stands on "controversial issues" (the only kind of issues there are), especially if organizations "throw their weight around" and have an unfamiliar ethnic or religious complexion. "Let us be done with power politics," they say, apparently unaware that all politics in church and state is by definition power politics.

In 1949 a conference on United States foreign policy sponsored by the Federal Council of Churches said: "The corollary of all power is responsibility. Power can corrupt. So, too, it can be made to serve worthy ends." The statement called for the "responsible use" of United States power. Power is simply the ability to do what needs to be done in the world. God cares who holds power and who wins in politics, because political decisions vitally affect the destiny of men and of nations.

Instead of attempting to flee power Christian citizens should help the people with the right policies to gain power. This means that American citizens should

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study the alternative policies offered by the Republican and Democratic parties and decide which alternative is better for the country and the world. The major parties are the chief instruments for presenting policy alternatives to the voters. To be most effective the citizen should work within the party of his choice where significant decisions are made over which the non-party member has no control. Both independents (who belong to no party) and partisans (who belong to a major party) can be conscientious and intelligent voters, but the partisan has far more influence over national policy. An independent can express his conviction only once, at the general election. A party member can express his conviction many times; he can help select candidates and define policies in party caucuses, in campaigns and in the primary.

There are two common myths which nonpolitical Protestants often invoke. One is that there is no significant difference between the Democrats and the Republicans. A study of Democratic and Republican national administrations and the party voting records of the House and Senate over the past three or more decades indicates that there is a persistent and predictable difference between the two major parties on practically every important national issue. The other myth is that "pressure groups" run America. Political scientists tell us that the major parties are more powerful than special-interest groups and that stronger and more disciplined parties offer the best means of keeping pressure groups in check. The political party is a major vehicle of justice and order in our society. We cannot work effectively for more "responsible society" unless we are willing to use the necessary instruments of power for translating our preferences into policy.

THEOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR

Probably no person ever matched in every detail the profile of the nonpolitical Protestant sketched above. But there is considerable evidence to indicate that many Protestants today are instructed by one or more of the assumptions which make up this profile.

Implicit in my critique of the nonpolitical approach is the thesis that bad theology (an unbiblical understanding of man and his destiny) leads to bad politics; for example, a utopian view of man leads to political irrelevance and therefore to moral irresponsibility. This thesis needs correction. If we were living in a rational and logical world there might be a simple one-to-one ratio between relevant theological assumptions and political behavior, but we aren't.

It may be possible to deduce certain theological assumptions held by an individual by observing his political behavior, but it is certainly not possible to predict his behavior from his assumptions. One's understanding of and behavior in politics are derived from both theological and non-theological sources. For most persons non-theological factors such as socio-economic status, self-interest, a faulty

understanding of political reality and the sheer force of tradition doubtless have a greater impact on their political behavior than their more-or-less theoretical assumptions about the nature of man and of history and the "middle axioms" derived from such assumptions.

Non-theological factors help shape one's understanding of what politics is and how political decisions are made as well as the position one takes on particular political issues.

Reinhold Niebuhr has pointed out, for example, how the actual political position of both philosophical liberals and conservatives often distort even the partial truth in their respective philosophical assumptions by wedding that truth to prejudices derived from their own social station, their unacknowledged self-interest or their understanding of contemporary society. Modern conservatives like Russell Kirk, for example, tend "to mix . . . the realism of Edmund Burke . . . with an uncritical acceptance of inequality, conformity, and the current balance or equilibrium of power in any social scene."²

William Lee Miller deals with this same problem in an article on Reinhold Niebuhr.³ Miller notes that *Time* and *Life* invoke Niebuhr's theology as a sanction for their anti-Niebuhrian political views. "The Luce publications are powerful representatives of a conservatism which likes religion, which especially likes the doctrine of original sin, and which sometimes seems to think it finds support in Niebuhr." While Miller does not hold that Niebuhr's politics flows directly from his theology, he does say that political conservatives simply do not understand the breadth and depth of Niebuhr's position and have no right to claim him as their high priest by two-dimensional proof-texting.

We have said that the Protestant nonpolitical approach is politically irrelevant, morally irresponsible and biblically unsound, but that "bad political behavior" will not be corrected simply by "good theology." How, then can the Protestant witness in America become more politically relevant than it is today? There is no easy answer. But we can list three indispensable elements of any responsible Protestant political ethic: 1) an understanding of men and of history derived from the Bible and the Christian tradition, 2) an understanding of political reality gained from the disciplines of history and political science (supplemented by the *New York Times!*), and 3) some modest capacity to transcend self-interest which can come only through the grace of God.

²"Liberalism and Conservatism," *Christianity and Society*, Winter 1954-55, Vol. 20, No. 1, pages 3 and 4.

³"The Irony of Reinhold Niebuhr," *The Reporter*, January 13, 1955, pages 11-15.

The Scientific Faith of American Scientists

PHILIP H. PHENIX



IN WRITING ABOUT THIS subject I do not pretend to speak as a scientist, but only as an interested layman. No one can really claim authority regarding any faith unless he stands within that faith. I make no such claim here. My only qualifications for attempting this paper are an undergraduate major in mathematical physics, some seven or eight years subsequent experience in two branches of applied mathematics, and some unsystematic reading and reflection in the field of scientific philosophy, chiefly as related to my principal study in philosophy of religion.

THE PLURALITY OF FAITHS

A scientist is, first of all, a human being. He is a complex thinking, feeling organism, the springs of whose action are as profound and manifold as those of human beings in other occupations. No person ever plays only a single role. A scientist is not merely a scientist. He may also be a parent or a lover or a worshiper, a citizen, or an artist. Each of these roles in any whole person's life is governed by a faith or pattern of faiths. For this reason it is not possible to speak meaningfully merely of *the* faith of American scientists. Scientists have as many faiths or bundles of faiths as they have roles in life. For this reason we must restrict ourselves to the examination of the *scientific* faith of the scientists—that is to say, to that faith or faiths which are implicit in the scientists' specific scientific inquiries. The scientific faith of the scientist is the faith which underlies his activity not as a lover or a citizen or an artist but as a scientist.

It would be interesting to examine the question whether there is any correlation between the scientific faith of the scientist and the other faiths which he lives by. It has sometimes been tacitly assumed that the correlation is very high. While this is undoubtedly true in many cases, it has been my observation that in many other instances there is very little relationship. I suspect that there may even be something like a law of compensation with regard to the faiths which constitute a person's total outlook. It may be, for example, that one whose scientific life is governed by a principle of stark simplicity, impeccable accuracy, and rigid logic may exhibit in his personal relationships extremely illogical attitudes and highly sentimental behavior.

Even when we have narrowed the subject down to the scientific faith of the scientist, we are still faced with a complex of faiths. In the first place, there is no such thing as science in general. There are only particular sciences. Each branch of science has its own particular faith or group of faiths. The first principles of the physicist will in general be different from those of the historian. The anthropologist generally operates on different assumptions from those of the chemist.

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In the second place, even within any given branch of science, there will be different schools of thought which may be characterized by different fundamental assumptions. This is true even in the old and well established sciences like physics, where there are radical differences of scientific faith involved in the interpretation of the so-called principle of indeterminacy. The notorious sectarian differences in the field of psychology, once again, are not primarily matters of differing experimental results, but of differing underlying faiths. In the third place, even within a given branch or school of science different scientists may approach their work from somewhat differing basic assumptions. In the last analysis there are as many different faiths as there are different persons.

All this is merely by way of insisting that there is no such thing as *the* scientific faith and that it is possible in such a discussion as this merely to illustrate some facets of scientific faith as held by certain persons in certain areas of scientific inquiry.

Having mentioned the differences in faiths as between different branches of science, it will be well in passing to mention a problem which will be dealt with more fully later. This is the problem of the difference between the scientific faith in the natural sciences and in the sciences of man. Apparently a different set of working assumptions is required for the study of beings who know that they are being studied and when there is a basic identity between the one who studies and that which he studies, in comparison with the case where the scientist is dealing only with the lower orders of creation. It has sometimes been suggested that so great is the difference between the faiths in the natural sciences and the social sciences that they ought not both be called scientific. We shall want to keep this distinction between the two broad areas of scientific inquiry clearly in mind in our subsequent discussions.

I want to deal with one more preliminary matter before entering upon a discussion of various aspects of scientific faith. Is there a distinctively *American* scientific faith? Do American scientists, as scientists, differ fundamentally from their European or Asiatic counterparts, as to assumptions in their professional work? The easy conventional answer would be that scientific faith knows no national distinctions, that science is science, that there is no peculiarly American science, or Russian science, or Japanese science, or British science, that science deals with truth, and truth is universal fact, wherever it may be found or whoever may find it. There is some truth in such a contention, and toward the end of this paper I shall try to show what that truth is. A more modest answer would be to say that scientific faith is less influenced by local cultural patterns than many other kinds of faiths men live by. There is, for example, a universality about mathematics and about the assumptions which underlie the mathematical endeavor which places it above national differences. But when all this has been said, it still must be admitted that there is evidence for distinctive national coloration even in the realm of scientific faith. There is, for example, the familiar contrast between

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German science of the traditional variety and typical Anglo-American science. For the classical German scientist, theory was the supreme achievement; the scientific quest was the search for facts to justify the theory. Perhaps this is a reflection in the field of scientific endeavor of the a-priorism of German idealistic philosophy as supremely exemplified in Hegel. English and American science, on the other hand, has typically been more inductive, with major interest in the accumulation of quantities of data. The Russians have had their own theories of genetics and their peculiar prejudices against the theory of relativity. We are also only too familiar with the anthropological "findings" of the Nazis. The differences are even more profound in the sciences of man than in the natural sciences. We are currently witnessing, for example, a resurgence in some quarters of "true" American economics, and the purging from high places of such "un-American" economic analyses as those of J. M. Keynes, not to mention those of Karl Marx!

When we turn to fundamentally different cultures, such as those of India or of China, the problem of scientific faith becomes much more apparent. There are, of course, Indian physicists and Chinese psychologists, with Western-style faiths which would not differ much from the corresponding American scientific faiths. On the other hand, we should not dismiss too quickly some of the systems of scientific thought entirely different from those of the Western world, as, for example, those of the Hindus. There is such a thing as authentic and distinctive Hindu science, whose assumptions differ radically from those of Western thought. I have neither the time nor the knowledge to go into the matter here. I mention these completely different faiths only in order to underline the fact of the plurality of scientific faiths and the necessity of recognizing the cultural conditioning of any scientific faith, including the American.

When I speak now of the scientific faith or of an article of scientific faith, I refer to any unargued assumption or working principle which the scientist adopts for the prosecution of his inquiry. I refer to the initial premises from which he proceeds—those things which he takes for granted without attempting to defend them. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a defense of a faith, for as soon as a demonstration or a defense is provided, the ground of faith has already shifted. A presupposition or assumption or commitment is only faith so long as no justification for it on grounds beyond itself is provided. An article of faith is not only a principle; it is a *first* principle. I speak now with reference to a particular individual. What is a first principle to one may be a subordinate or secondary principle to another. To the first it is an article of faith; to the second it is not.

I want to deal with some elements of scientific faith now in three different aspects. First I intend to speak briefly of what I shall call "the lower levels" of scientific faith. Then I shall discuss a number of traditional general assumptions in science, and finally I shall deal with what I regard as the most general and ultimate characteristics of any scientific faith.

THE LOWER LEVELS OF SCIENTIFIC FAITH

First, then, about the "lower levels" of scientific faith. The layman tends to think of science in terms of the scientific geniuses like Galileo, Einstein, Darwin, or Freud. But the average scientist is not a genius. He is often a person of rather limited intelligence. In fact, many a person has apparently gone into science precisely because his intellectual and emotional limitations required the simplicity and exactness of a narrow and safe research field. There is a great deal of extremely unimaginative and routine work involved in much scientific research. As one looks through the various scientific periodicals with their vast outpourings of research reports, he will be struck with the relative triviality and mediocrity of much that is said. These meager fruits are the product of the correspondingly circumscribed faiths. The routine scientist spends his life making experiments, testing hypotheses, and gathering data within the very limited confines of a particular conceptual and methodological scheme. He takes as his first principles the working hypotheses advanced by the particular school within the particular branch of science to which he has attached himself. The working hypotheses of that school are his faith in the sense that his inquiries proceed from them without examination or justification of them. He may, for example, be a behavioristic psychologist who gives no thought to the validation of the behavioristic assumption and who is devoted only to the analysis of human or animal life processes within its terms.

Most working scientists presuppose the tenets of the scientific sect to which, largely by historical accident, they have become attached. The technical mastery of even a portion of one of the major branches of science is so exacting and requires so long a time that the average scientist has no choice but to bet his scientific life upon the working assumptions of a particular sect. Usually it takes decades for the dialectic operating within the whole scientific community to render a decisive verdict about the working principles of any given school. In a sense, therefore, scientific faith on the lower level of which I am now speaking is a very precarious thing. In viewing from outside the accomplishments of the scientists it is so easy to look only at the successes, or perhaps also at the failures, of those who ultimately succeeded, and to forget that in large part the faith of many scientific workers eventually may have proved to be in vain.

What I have been saying here about these lower levels of scientific faith is not meant in a disparaging sense. Scientific progress depends upon the many small advances made on each segment of the advancing frontier of knowledge. I am merely trying to emphasize the point that in actual fact scientific faith on the lower levels is usually a rather limited, prosaic, specific, unimaginative, and even frequently erroneous set of presuppositions. I want to underline the fact that the scientific faith of the average scientist is rather unpretentious, uninspiring, and generally not very adventurous.

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SOME STANDARD ARTICLES OF SCIENTIFIC FAITH

Let me turn now to a brief discussion of a number of dogmas often attributed to or actually affirmed by the scientific believer. The eleven articles which I shall mention and discuss are by no means intended to be exhaustive. They merely illustrate some facets of a more general and usually more articulate scientific faith than that just discussed.

The first such article is that there is such a thing as *the* scientific method. Many a modern man has proclaimed his faith in the scientific method. Magnificent though the results of science may be, it is claimed, the true glory and essential uniqueness of science lie not in results but in method. That which distinguishes the scientific elect from the benighted lay folk, it is implied, is the possession of a very special tool whereby new links in the chain of knowledge and therefore in the conquest of all of man's ills may successively be forged.

Naturally anyone observing the dazzling results of the application of scientific method should want immediately to avail himself of so powerful a tool. It would seem strange that anyone would continue to use the shaky and unreliable methods of a pre-scientific era. Fortunately, descriptions of the wonderful new method are readily available. Most school children in their classes in general science become familiar with at least the general outlines of scientific method. There is no want of textbooks on the elements of logic and scientific method. Observation, experiment, hypothesis formation, prediction, and testing have long been commonly understood (even if not widely practiced) features of the methodology of inquiry.

The striking thing is that as one studies the history of scientific progress, it is apparent that the actual processes employed in making discoveries were of extreme variety and had little in common with the neat textbook descriptions of scientific method. The more one looks at actual case histories in science the more convinced he may become that the concept of "the scientific method" is extraordinarily hazy and ill-defined. Truly creative scientists are indeed a lawless lot! They are often great precisely because they do not follow the standard rules of procedure for the profession. James B. Conant has performed a great service in pointing out that science is really an extension of common sense—which is singularly free from the strictures of technical regimentation. It also needs to be added, I think, that science often advances by the operation of what is closely akin to artistic intuition—which is a very *uncommon* sense, but equally free of rigid schematization of procedure. But whether common sense or stroke of genius, it seems clear that there is no very simple and clear meaning of "scientific method." Scientific method as an object of faith is as unsatisfactory as that vague and undefined Something to which so much so-called religious faith refers.

A second article of scientific faith is closely related to the first and is really implied in it. This is the often-accepted working assumption that the making of

observations and the gathering of data will somehow in and of themselves yield "facts" and that a sufficient array of facts so obtained will, in turn, automatically produce scientific theories, or laws. The most striking evidence for the existence of this article of faith is the eagerness with which so many researchers amass great hoards of observations and the readiness of so many relatively dull persons tirelessly to send out questionnaires, collect material, gather observations, and hold interviews.

It is, of course, necessary to the advancement of knowledge that observations be made and facts gathered. But there is no discerning of fact from observation or theory from facts without the operation of creative intelligence. Faith in the automatic manifestation of a pre-established harmony within the data will inevitably be disappointed.

A third article of faith is belief in the complete intelligibility of nature. Though present knowledge is partial, it is assumed that in principle there is nothing which may not be known. It is my impression that this rationalistic dogma is in many quarters giving way to a much more modest assumption. As a symbol for the apparently endless perfectibility of the system of knowledge perhaps this faith has some meaning. But it is important at the same time to recognize that such a presupposition may stand in the way of a just appreciation of the inherent limitations of human knowledge. Since knowing is a correlation between the knower and the known, knowledge is at least conditioned by man's nature. One major effect of the present-day widespread interest in epistemology is to draw attention to the limitations and conditions of human knowledge and to cast doubt upon the uncritical acceptance of such a belief as the complete intelligibility of nature.

A fourth common assumption is the universality of causation. This is an aspect of faith in the complete intelligibility of nature, when this is taken to mean the tracing of causal connections. While there may be more to science than this, undoubtedly it is an important, if not the most important part. Unfortunately in most modern science and philosophy causation is interpreted almost entirely in terms of *efficient* causation. Final and formal causes in Aristotle's sense have long been out of favor. However, some of the current controversies in the field of psychology converge around the issue of causality, chiefly as related to the concept of purpose or intention in the problem of motivation. We may look to the outcome of these debates for light upon the present article of faith. Much of the trouble about causality, however, started not in psychology but in physics. The quantum theory and the principle of indeterminacy, together with the ascendancy of statistical mechanics, have raised the issue in acute form. In the new physics the traditional principle of causal determinacy has been shown apparently not to apply exactly and individually but only in a statistical sense and for physical systems large in comparison with atomic dimensions. It should be added that there are physicists (amongst whom Einstein is included) who still believe in the

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universal reign of causality, although this assumption adds nothing directly useful to our understanding of physical systems.

The principle of causality is directly related to the problem of novelty. The recognition of novelty, especially in the doctrines of emergent evolution, together with an unquestioned acceptance of the doctrine of universality of efficient causation have led to the development of some rather curious and paradoxical forms of the theory of causal connection. The emergent evolutionist, wedded to efficient causation and rejecting final causes, and yet faced with the production of novel forms, is forced to postulate what he may call "emergent causation," which seems merely to be a name that covers up an unsolved problem.

Psychology, quantum physics, and the problem of novelty are all forcing the re-examination of the naive faith in the universality of causation. That faith is no longer so clear and unequivocal as it once was. May I express my own conviction that faith in a principle of causation, *adequately conceived*, is not only so insistent that it cannot be avoided, but is also the most elementary ground upon which all religious faith rests.

A fifth commonly held article of scientific faith is that of so-called "naive realism." This is the assumption that the scientific picture of the world is "the real world." According to this faith, the scientist, free of all illusion and fancy, sees the world "as it really is." While a healthy sense of the reality of the external world and of the given-ness of the things with which science deals seems an essential presupposition of the scientific enterprise, it must be recognized that in recent decades there has been a growing awareness on the part of scientists and philosophers of the inadequacy of the naive form of realism. In its place is being substituted a more critical position in which due recognition is given to the correlative nature of knowledge. Some thinkers like Eddington have gone so far as to try to show that the entire structure of the physical world including even such apparently given facts as the number of elementary particles constituting the universe, are simply a consequence of the ways in which man defines his measurements. Most scientists would, of course, not go this far in reaction against naive realism. But it is certainly true that amongst thoughtful scientists there is no longer such a confident and unquestioned faith as there once was that scientific descriptions are a simple representation of the world as it really is. And insofar as the earlier faith is maintained, it is now clearly seen by critical thinkers to be unjustified.

A somewhat different way of stating the assumption just discussed is contained in the sixth traditional article of scientific faith, namely, the assumption of complete scientific objectivity. This has been discussed so much in recent years, especially by theological critics of scientific pretensions, that very little need be said here. I think that many of these critics have underestimated the extent to which objectivity is possible in science. I think also that they have implied, either

consciously or unconsciously, that all subjectivisms are equally desirable. As already pointed out, thoughtful scientists are becoming more and more aware of the observer's role in scientific inquiry. Precisely because there is an observer there is in the immediate sense no possibility of complete objectivity. But it is possible to obtain knowledge which is not dependent upon the individual peculiarities or biases of the particular observer. It is also interesting to note that in the theory of relativity, the cornerstone of which is the recognition of the place of the observer, the ultimate achievement of the theory is the discovery of what are called "invariants," i.e., quantities and relationships which are independent of the observer or of his particular frame of reference. This would appear to come very close to, if not actually achieving, complete objectivity. The really crucial questions regarding the objectivity of scientific knowledge, however, arise not so much in the physical sciences as in the sciences of man, where it is much more questionable whether or not such invariants can be found.

The seventh article of faith might be called "the picturability of reality." Many scientists have assumed that an adequate description of nature could be made by the use of various kinds of pictures or models. Generally the model is that which lies ready at hand from the dominant social and cultural expressions of the particular era. Since the industrial revolution, for example, the machine has been the favored mode of representation. Personalized forces were an equally natural mode for the pre-mechanical age. The twentieth century has been a period of rapid transformation in this matter of picture-making. This is especially true in physics, where attempts at a pictorial representation of the four-dimensional space-time continuum and hyper-spaces of still higher numbers of dimensions had to be abandoned, and perhaps even more strikingly in quantum theory, where the picture of the Bohr atom as a miniature planetary system had to be abandoned in a little more than a decade in favor of mathematical descriptions which completely eluded sensory symbolization. The stringencies of positivism and especially of operationalism are systematic formulations of the rejection of the faith in the picturability of reality. There is an intriguing and possibly significant parallel between this development in scientific faith and the religious protest against visible representations of the deity.

An eighth common presupposition is the primacy of physical reality. Many scientists take it for granted that the world of physics is in some sense or other fundamental, or basic, or primary. This is certainly the faith of the reductive naturalist and of the old-fashioned materialist. In fact, in such cases it is not a question of the *primacy* of physical reality but of the *sole reality* of the physical world. Evolutionary naturalism, while recognizing the emergence of life and mind, is still under the sway of the doctrine of the primacy of the physical. Undoubtedly this dogma has gained strength in considerable degree because of the spectacular successes of the physical sciences in contrast with the more limited gains in the non-physical sciences. The scientific mind, in seeking for exactitude and certainty,

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and in searching for a basis for common agreement, is bound to defer to those realms of inquiry in which such securities are possible. It is an interesting fact that within the past twenty-five years the most vigorous apologists for the primacy of physics are no longer the physicists but the social scientists and certain psychologists. Advances in mathematical physics and in the philosophy of physical science have seriously qualified the faith of earlier physicists. A good many workers in the non-physical sciences appear to be unaware of this change in climate of faith and demonstrate their adherence to the old dogma most pointedly by fashioning their own inquiries in slavish imitation of the methods employed by the physical scientists, as, for example, those who try to explain or explain away thought in purely physicalistic terms.

I am not suggesting that scientists are turning toward absolute idealism or denying the reality of the physical world. Most scientists are still quite faithful to the assumption of the primacy of the physical. But there are signs that the days of this widespread uncritical acceptance are numbered, and that not only philosophers like Whitehead but scientific leaders themselves are coming to grips more seriously and adequately with the question of the place of mind in nature.

A ninth article of faith may be called the primacy of theoretical reason. The so-called "pure" scientist has traditionally been scornful of the one who merely applies knowledge. It has been tacitly assumed that the scientist is a spectator and not an actor, that his is but to reason why, never to do or die. In America this faith has been greatly qualified, particularly under the influence of pragmatism. In pragmatic terms, thought is a tool of practical social interests. In spite of this typical American emphasis, it seems to me that there is still an implicit faith on the part of many scientific workers in the primacy of theoretical reason. This is really a correlate of the assumption about the objectivity of scientific knowledge, and everything that was said about the criticism of that basic assumption must apply also to the question of the primacy of theoretical reason. Especially in the field of the social sciences, it is my belief that more and more the inextricability of the practical and the theoretical will be demonstrated. It should become increasingly apparent that there are orders of scientific truth which depend primarily not upon detached observation but upon responsible participation.

A tenth assumption is that knowledge is essentially and inevitably good. Many scientists appear to have assumed uncritically that the advancement of knowledge is an unqualified human benefit. I need not dwell upon the impact which the recent linkage of scientific research on a large scale with the conduct of destructive war has had on this common assumption. It is now becoming widely recognized that knowledge, like any other tool, is good only if rightly employed and that it may equally well be turned to evil account. Even though this article of faith has been so dramatically demonstrated false, it is still widely held. Perhaps its wide currency is in part related to the American faith in universal education, particularly

when the business of education is conceived primarily as the imparting of facts and skills and only secondarily, if at all, with moral values. The pernicious influence of this dogma can only be overcome by the re-establishment of the primacy of the moral dimension in all phases of the educational process. One of the most powerful influences in this direction will be the conscious and articulate repudiation of the dogma by leading scientists and their colleagues in the field of scientific inquiry.

The last of the traditional articles of scientific faith which I shall mention is the assumption that the general is superior to the particular. It has regularly been assumed that the value of a scientific theory is measured by the breadth and variety of facts for which it accounts. It has been assumed that the scientist has no interest in the particular as such, but only in the general principles of which it is an illustration. This article of faith has often been pointed to by the critics of scientific enthusiasts as evidence, from the scientists' own creed, of the severe limitations of the scientific description of the world. For, claim these critics, the uniqueness of the individual, which it is the province primarily of the *artist* to portray, is really a far more important and interesting aspect of reality than the abstractions and generalizations of the scientists. Insofar as generality is actually the sole aim of the scientist this criticism seems to me entirely justified. But here, as in the case of the other articles of faith discussed, I believe the picture is changing. The most convincing evidence, to my mind, comes from the field of the psychology of personality. There is now developing in that branch of psychology a genuine science of the individual. I am thinking particularly of the work of such a man as Gordon Allport. Clinical psychology also, and many of the developments within psychotherapy, have provided approaches to a real science of the individual. This does not mean that generality is abandoned altogether, but it does mean that the unchallenged assumption that science deals only with the general no longer holds good for all scientists. The systematic analysis of concrete individual personalities and societies has a respectable place in scientific study. Of course history is the crucial science (if indeed it be a science) in respect to this question. Those who hold that generality is the sole aim of science would certainly have a very truncated view of the study of history. They would all aspire to be Toynbees or Spenglers. Most historians would agree that there is another side to the study of history, and many would hold that the description and analysis of unique happenings may properly be called a scientific undertaking. Professor Casserly in his book, *The Christian in Philosophy*, takes as a general theme this contrast between the general and the singular, and he expresses his belief that the authentic Christian philosophy alone can adequately deal with the problem of the unique. My own view is that this is no special province of a Christian approach, but that an adequate scientific faith (which I believe is in the making) can and will adequately deal with the problem of the individual person and of the singular events which constitute world history.

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SKETCH OF AN IDEAL SCIENTIFIC CREDO

Having now dealt at some length with these eleven illustrative articles of scientific faith, I should like now to present a statement of what appear to me to be the ultimate constituents of an ideal scientific faith. I realize that it is presumptuous to attempt this, but I do so nonetheless because it may help to clarify some of the more permanent and pervasive constituents of the scientific spirit. I shall summarize this basic scientific faith in six propositions..

First: Knowledge is possible. The presupposition before all others in science is that it is possible to understand. This is not to say that complete understanding of the world is possible, nor is it to say what the nature of that understanding is. The primary assumption is that in some sense or other a kinship exists between man and his world, that man the knower can become related through processes of intelligence in various ways to his world. Science cannot exist in the face of complete epistemological scepticism. There must be a basic faith in the possibility of knowledge.

Second: It is better to know than to be ignorant. This is not quite the same as the tenth article of faith discussed above, namely, the dogma of the essential and inevitable goodness of knowledge. The ultimate scientific faith would not require that increase in knowledge must always result in an increase in human good. But scientific inquiry must presuppose the worthwhileness of its task. There must be a faith that it is better to know than to be ignorant, in spite of the ill uses to which knowledge may be put. This assumption is not inconsistent with other assumptions about the necessity for taking social responsibility for the consequences of the human use of scientific knowledge. It is to assert that there is an imperative for inquiry placed upon the scientist, that he has, as it were, a sacred duty and a high privilege to uncover the intelligible structures of things. The true scientist ought to have a sense of vocation. Many of the scientists whom I have known have very literally felt themselves laid hold on by the lure of understanding.

Third: There exist in our experience of the world regularities which render description possible. There can be knowledge only because our experience is not made up of a series of entirely unrelated impressions. The first step in science is the formation of concepts. Concepts are possible only because there are unities or similarities or regularities within our experience of the world which underlie the process of abstraction. We understand only through the mediation of concepts. Another way of stating this is to say that the process of classification is fundamental in scientific activity, i.e., that there are likenesses which permit different entities to be linked together in classes. The processes of concept-formation and of abstraction and analysis by means of classification do not do away with concern for the unique individual. Quite the contrary. It is only by virtue of the manifold of classes into which an individual falls that he can be understood at all. The critics of abstraction usually fail to see that a scientific account need never include

only a single dimension of analysis, but may involve a description in terms of a number of classes to which the individual belongs. It is precisely the exhibition of the individual in his relationships to many other entities which constitutes the basis for an understanding of the unique.

Fourth: There exist regularities in nature and experience which render *explanation* possible. The scientist is never content merely to describe what he observes. He assumes that more than classification is possible. He assumes that there are also regularities within the temporal sequence of events. In one sense such temporal regularities merely point to the possibility of another dimension of classification. Explanation is really an extension of the principle of description. Every scientific explanation is a systematic linking together of certain successive events. The nature of the explanation depends upon which events are so linked. That such a grouping of events into temporal sequences is possible is the fourth article of scientific faith. This means that no present event is assumed to be a completely novel one, but that in it are present the contributions of previous moments, according to certain principles of relevance. This is not the same as asserting the universality of the principle of causation. It is simply to state that there are threads of connection which can be discerned between the past and the present. Furthermore, the marking out of these regularities underlies the possibility of prediction, which is the hallmark of scientific explanation. Faith in the possibility of prediction means that the threads which bind the past with the present are also expected to bind the present with the future.

Fifth: This knowledge which comes in the form of descriptions and explanations is not private but sharable. This is in a way the most difficult and controversial of all the articles. The scientist believes that what he has discovered is not merely his property or his private impressions but in some sense the truth as it really is. And he does not necessarily mean by this that there is no subjective component in his knowledge. What he does mean is that his conclusions, insofar as they are scientifically credible, must be capable of verification. Verification means that any other person might repeat his experiences and come out with the same conclusions. This article of faith reflects the essentially social nature of science. Scientific faith is not faith in the individual and his private experiences but in the possibility of establishing a community of sharable experience.

This is a difficult article of scientific faith to maintain, yet it seems essential to the whole meaning of the scientific enterprise. Obviously the demand of verifiability for knowledge must involve a very careful description of the conditions under which such verification is expected to take place. Even in the case of the simplest sense data it is necessary to assume that the observer possesses the requisite healthy sense equipment. It is possible to obtain a very high degree of agreement on matters which depend solely on sense experience. But there is no science which depends solely on sense experience. The real difficulty comes in the attempt to share

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experiences which are of a more complex nature. While it is relatively easy to set the conditions for verification in the case of sense experience, it may not be nearly so easy where other types of experience are involved, e.g., in moral judgments, assertions about beauty, or in the realm of religious awareness.

I cannot hope here to do more than mention this very difficult issue. While I think it is true that an essential article of scientific faith is the possibility of creating a scientific community wherein verification as properly defined may reliably and consistently take place, I believe that this faith will involve a clarification of what is meant by the scientific community. It would certainly mean the abandonment of the simple-minded conception of the unconditionally *public* character of scientific knowledge, in favor of a careful statement of the kinds of capacities (more than good sense organs) which must be possessed by those who affirm scientific truth. Such a community can be created only by the tireless pursuit of the ideal of intelligible communication by scientists and others, especially across professional and departmental lines. It is clear also that out of such a reconstructed scientific community as might emerge would develop newer and more adequate meanings of the scientific ideal of objectivity.

Sixth: Scientific knowledge is cumulative. It is the faith of the scientist not only that he can describe and explain and that such knowledge is sharable but that each stage of scientific inquiry opens the door to a subsequent stage, i.e., that science is essentially progressive in nature. The scientist does not believe in knowledge as a summation of isolated facts or theories. He believes that knowledge is hierarchically structured and that the body of scientific knowledge is, as it were, an organism. The prime mark of failure in a scientific theory is sterility. The mark of success is fecundity. As Conant has well pointed out, the key to the understanding of science is not in a peculiar methodology, assuming that one exists at all, but in its cumulative character. The rise of modern science, according to this view, was not due primarily to the adoption of a new method of inquiry, but to an awakening interest in and dedication to the principle of fecundity in explanatory principles. Scientific faith is in this respect dependent upon faith in progress. Perhaps modern science owes more than we usually recognize to the spirit of expansiveness of the great age of discovery.

All six of the above articles in what I have termed an ultimate scientific faith presuppose what might be called a drive toward community. By this I mean the establishment of a harmonious relationship between disparate entities. Thus, the first two refer to the possibility and desirability of knowledge, through the establishment of a relationship of community between the knower and the known. In the third article this knowledge is seen to consist in the possibility of unities or regularities amongst the various entities which constitute the world as experienced. Beyond such unities of classification there are the communities involved in explanation, through the tracing of regularities within the temporal sequence. In the fifth

article it is presupposed that there is a possibility of community amongst scientific observers and in the sixth there is the possibility of community amongst the various stages and facets of scientific inquiry, producing through successive articulation and coordination of diverse theories and facts an organic body of knowledge, informed by an implicit principle of growth.

SCIENTIFIC FAITH AND RELIGIOUS FAITH

In conclusion, I wish to add a few words about the relation between scientific faith and religious faith. In my opinion, much of the current controversy between the apologists for scientific faith and the apologists for religion is unfair from both sides. Often the exponent of scientific faith will point with pride to the achievements of modern science and with disdain to the continuing wrangles of the theologians, and contend on that basis that so-called religious knowledge is pure subjective fancy. Such an enthusiast simply does not face the question of the bitter conflicts between various scientific schools of thought, nor does he take account of the serious attempts of the theologians to meet the difficulties which he raises. Nor is such a scientific dogmatist sufficiently aware of the critical problems which underlie the defense of his own scientific principles. On the other hand, a good many of the contemporary apologists for religion argue somewhat as follows: "To be sure, religious believers have their faith-presuppositions. But whether they admit it or not, scientists also have *their* presuppositions. But any presupposition is not a matter of demonstration. Therefore the exponent of scientific faith has no grounds on which to criticize the religious man, since both must ultimately rest their case on undemonstrated faith." The weakness in such a position is that it fails to recognize that the real issue is not so much the *existence* of presuppositions as their analysis and criticism. Every presupposition has consequences and relationships to other presuppositions. The criticism of faith must always proceed, it seems to me, by the exhibition of such consequences and such relationships.

There is no justification for a completely closed-minded religious faith. It is vulnerable precisely because it is not open to criticism or analysis. A scientific faith may be and often is, just as narrow and dogmatic as that. In my opinion the articles of an ultimate scientific faith such as sketched above provide for the correction of the more particular dogmatisms that may arise amongst individual scientists or schools of scientific thought. Any really profound religious faith must be similarly self-correcting.

It is my conviction that there is on the ultimate level a real convergence between scientific faith and religious faith. It seems to me that both are involved in a search for and a conviction about an ultimate ground of unity. Both presuppose the possibility of progressive realization of various forms of togetherness in the world. The doctrine that God is Love well expresses the impulse to community which I believe underlies the scientific enterprise. The scientific faith is

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coming more and more to include the recognition that practice and theory are interrelated, just as religious faith is a life of knowing and doing. Scientific faith depends also upon a recognition of the correlation of subject and object, just as religious faith depends upon both the objective order of things and the commitment of the subject within that order.

In the heavenly kingdom, it is said, many of the temporal distinctions will disappear. I wonder if then it will be possible to tell the difference between a scientist and a theologian.

Ernest Hemingway

HYATT H. WAGGONER



NY COMMENT ON THE relation of Hemingway's work to Christian thought today must begin with a number of apparent paradoxes: not that I want to try to appear clever, at least not in this instance or in this way, but that I would like to be as accurate as possible and to clear away some probable misunderstandings.

To the unliturgical Christian, Hemingway is likely to seem the very embodiment of all the forces of anti-Christian "modernism." His work is full of brutality and "sex," his sympathetic characters reject large segments of the Christian code, he pictures a meaningless world in which lost souls seek violent sensations to fill the void in their lives. He offends against piety by paraphrasing the Lord's prayer with the Spanish word for "nothing" substituted for the key words: "Our *nada* who art in *nada*, *nada* be thy name . . ." Yet his work has been a powerful influence for faith in our generation.

One of the reasons, and perhaps the most important one, why Hemingway's work seems to so many well-meaning but uneducated Christians to constitute a threat to their religion is that a good many of them are identifying the ethical content of the faith with nineteenth century mores. Hemingway's work does in fact constitute a frontal attack on Victorianism, including the peculiarly Victorian aspects of nineteenth century morality. And there are many still in our day, outside of the centers of cultural change, who identify Christianity with the attitudes of those who hounded Oscar Wilde and his family (taking it as their personal responsibility to see that the sins of the father were visited on the second generation) into martyrdom to a "Christian" sense of the sacredness of the respectable. There is no comfort in Hemingway's work for the W.C.T.U. or for any League to Drive Deviants to Destruction. Yet implicit in all his work, and central to it, is the search for a viable morality.

On a somewhat more sophisticated level, Hemingway's stories may seem to militate against a Christian commitment because they present so powerfully, and so sympathetically, the facts and insights that make for "disillusion" in our time. Nick Addams on the way back across the lake from the Indian camp knows death so vividly that no pious reassurance that it is not really real can touch him. In a later story he sees his mother, querulously nourishing her illusions in her illness, for what she is; and he notes his father's failure of courage. *In Our Time* is not simply a great work of art: it is one of the really basic documents of our age. It shows us what it is like for a sensitive boy to grow up in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

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The underlying theme of the book is a search for the values that are dependable because they are based on reality. Neither Christian Scientists like Nick's mother nor nice old ladies whose views were formed by the last century's acculturated version of Christianity will find any support in it—or indeed be able to endure it, grant it reality. Yet young people today who are sick of pious frauds, of compromises between Christ and culture that lose the *kerygma* and adulterate the *didache*, of "idealism" too tender to face twentieth century facts, young people find a truth, a reality in Hemingway's early work that they have often not found anywhere else in their lives before, not in their homes and especially not in their churches.

Nothing that I have said so far is intended to suggest that Hemingway's work is explicitly or implicitly Christian or that it pictures the world just as a Christian sees it—though this is as good a place as any to note that the historic Christian view of the world is at least as far removed from the romantic idealism of the last century as it is from Hemingway's type of naturalism. The basic outlook in Hemingway's work is radically naturalistic, with some ingredient of romantic primitivism. It is not difficult to trace the line from Hemingway back not only to Zola but to Rousseau—or, for that matter, to the Marquis de Sade. His writings are not Christian writings.

Yet—and here we return to the original paradox—his work has been an influence working more toward than away from the faith, as I know from observing the spiritual journeys of many of my students. There are, as I see it, several reasons why it has so often had this effect.

Any view, not excluding the theologies and philosophies that are based upon and serve to explicate the Revelation, held over a long period of time, in the face of new experience, amid circumstances that refuse to remain fixed and facts that constantly alter, must be continuously re-interpreted. There is simply no such thing as a real, living Christian—or other—faith that is wholly static. Even the most determinedly neo-orthodox are "neo" as well as "orthodox": try as they may, they can be no other and maintain their sanity and the relevance of their faith. Christianity is of course in some final sense "an affair of the heart," but heart and head must come together, reach some sort of *modus vivendi*, if only an uneasy and provisional accommodation, if we are to remain whole men. A faith that cannot account for the facts, that is uneasy in the face of experience, that is unable to make good sense of the world as found, cannot be maintained in the long run. Held to stubbornly, it drives the holder either out of his mind or out of the society of reasonable men, and so in either case out of creative participation in the common work and activities of mankind.

The one certain way, therefore, of making the Christian view of the world die out would be to have nineteenth century Christian views remain unchanged. Once let it be granted that Christianity as understood by our grandparents (those

of them who had not already given it up for "spiritualism" or "the religion of humanity," as many of them had) is Christianity—that is, not just *a* but *the* Christian view, the real thing, the essence, and the more thoughtful among Christians today will have to stop being Christians, and there will be every year fewer converts among youth as education spreads. This does not mean that our grandparents were unusually obtuse or misguided but merely that their circumstances are not our circumstances and their understanding of the faith different from any we can intelligently hold.

The most significant fact about Hemingway's fiction, therefore, so far as the question at hand is concerned, is that it destroys the foundations of nineteenth century religiosity. It is not in this connection pertinent that it does not have the same effect on the real Christianity of a nineteenth century thinker like Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard would not have been revived today as he has been, by Christian and non-Christian alike, if his views had been typical of his century. Emerson and Arnold are the "representative men" for nineteenth century religion, and their views are not likely to be "rediscovered" in our time. When we are ready for Emerson again—Heaven forbid that the time should come soon—Hemingway will no longer be religiously serviceable for us. For his work is distinguished by the violence of its impact with the nineteenth century. It shares with most of the best of modern literature the implication that whatever values remain from the recent past we must prove beyond all doubting.

Hemingway's work says, in short, that to be religious, as being religious is commonly understood (Nick's mother in *In Our Time* and Ferguson in *A Farewell to Arms* are two examples) is to be "unaware." It is to ignore the facts. Cohn is idealistic rather than religious in *The Sun Also Rises*, but from the point of view of Hemingway's fiction the distinction is not important. Cohn's Bible is the work of W. H. Hudson, with the consequence that, like Ferguson in *A Farewell to Arms*, he is incapable of understanding the actions of the aware characters. He lives by illusions.

Now Hemingway's work would not have the significance it does have if the illusions it attacks were straw men. If the attitudes and ideas his work rejects had not been widely held, had not in fact been very nearly the "official" view of the recent past, we could, from a religious point of view, afford to ignore his work. But that is precisely what we cannot do if we are to be thoughtful—and in the end secure—in our faith. What are some of the illusions which are Hemingway's special targets?

First, the illusion that death doesn't really happen, that it will not happen if you are good, that we can afford to ignore it in our calculations. The most representative thinkers of the nineteenth century collaborated to convince us of this: the cemetery pictured in Huxley's *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* suggests the extent to which we have been convinced. But all of Hemingway's

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aware characters have as the chief item of their awareness the great *nada*, the nothingness, the void. The whole body of his work could be described as a "natural history of the dead" written in installments. A Christian will not look at death in just the way Hemingway's characters do, needless to say, but neither will he minimize, ignore, or deny the "last great enemy." A relevant Christian comment here might be that the last century tried to make its Christianity more pleasant and practical by emphasizing the carpenter shop and eliminating the cross. But Christ died, agonizingly, fearfully died, on the cross; the Resurrection as an article of faith is meaningless if he did not. If Hemingway's work seems obsessed with death, the emphasis is justified as a reaction against a literature and a culture that protected its curious illusion by ignoring a fact everywhere apparent. It takes no special X-ray equipment for the mind's eye to see the skull beneath the skin, but it takes courage and honesty, virtues conspicuously present in Hemingway's sympathetic characters.

Second, the illusion that man is essentially and primarily a sort of spirit, so that ideas and ideals are the only really important things in life. It is surely one of the more curious facts of intellectual history that a century drifting so rapidly toward materialism as the nineteenth should have given rise to this notion, but such is the case. Christian Science is the representative nineteenth century American religion. Pantheistic idealism is the representative philosophy until the last third of the century, when Herbert Spencer took the lead in the march toward Deweyism. Hemingway's work, in contrast, develops the naturalistic insight that came to the fore late in the century, crudely in the hands of the pioneer Zola, confusedly in Stephen Crane, poignantly in Conrad, tragically in Hardy. He shows us man as an animal—Christians prefer to say "creature." This is the meaning in Hemingway's work that offends Aunt Effie: it seems to her so dreadfully unchristian. But Christianity—biblical, historic, creedal, catholic—has always known that man is a creature, a somewhat special kind of creature to be sure but a creature still. Naturalists level man downward, Aunt Effie upward: orthodox Christianity holds to the center. Those who deny man's creatureliness are no closer to the center than those who deny his spirit, and they are probably somewhat more liable to the worst sins. Hawthorne made this point sufficiently clear, one would have thought, in his stories of the terrible careers of Aylmer and Ethan Brand, but his century was much too preoccupied in constructing its "religion of the heart" to pay attention to its nay-sayers.

Third, the illusion that where there's a will, there's a way—and all similar voluntaristic notions. Whole generations have been brought up in this country not on the Bible or the Prayerbook or *Pilgrim's Progress* but on the maxims clustering around the idea that nothing is impossible if you *wish* it hard enough. If you want to be healthy, wealthy, and wise, all it takes is a little early to bed and early to rise. There is no such word as "can't" in the dictionary. The only reason for failure is lack of sufficient *wanting* to succeed. "The only thing we have

to fear is fear itself." If all this strikes us as just too absurd to be taken seriously, we are mistaken: it is commonly a part of the liberal credo of the educated, as the last quotation should serve to remind us, as well as one of the most popular items of the stock in trade of mass culture. Popular Christianity came in the last century to mean not that man must conform his will to God's will but that frustration, pain, limitation—in short, evil—are just illusions of the irreligious. Humanistic idealism, which took over and domesticated the Protestant churches to a very great extent, particularly in the cities, rested on the ideas that the natural man is naturally good, that Nature is properly described as Mother Nature, and that we can't possibly go wrong if we just keep on "doing what comes naturally." If the nineteenth century had stopped short with its denial of original sin, and not gone on to develop so enthusiastically all the consequences of the denial, the twentieth century might not have had to start by denying all its predecessor's works. Hawthorne, Melville, Kierkegaard, Dostoevski speak to us today just to the extent that each was in rebellion against the liberal currents of his time, against the way the "more advanced minds" were moving. The more "progressive" thinkers were producing the basic and wholly representative, though disparate, notions that progress is automatic and that the only true basis of morality is absolute *self* reliance.

That no thoughtful Christian can take either Emerson's or Marx's notion seriously had to be made obvious before we could become Christian again. The nineteenth century apologists notwithstanding, no Christian theologian of any consequence has ever founded his thinking on Emerson's maxim, "Trust thyself," or on Marx's faith in the dialectic of history. Much of the current rediscovery of the doctrine of original sin, strikes one as superficial, faddish, and sometimes exaggerated, but any view of life essentially Emersonian or essentially Marxist is not simply non-Christian but anti-Christian. A recognition of evil, pain, and frustration, and a movement to overcome them not by denying them but by courage and endurance (sub-Christian, to be sure, but not therefore morally negligible) is central in Hemingway's work, and always has been. Really to experience his work therefore is to be humbled. The most recent illustration of this, and one of the most obvious and powerful, is the fable called *The Old Man and the Sea*. The old fisherman may not yet be a Christian, but he is a good prospect. No Emersonian idealist or "scientific humanist" is ever likely to repent.

Implied by this last illusion but worthy of separate mention in this rough and ready classification is the illusion that the good and the prudent always prosper. Limitations of time and space prevent an even approximately adequate presentation of this notion, this shop-keeper's ethic, so central in the intellectual history of the last two and a half centuries. Essentially, it starts as a secularization of Christian morality: it attempts to show that even if there is no God and no heaven, even if the content of the Gospel is only a fable for simple minds, still, Christian morality, or what is supposed to be the central part of it at any rate,

can be defended on the very practical ground that it *pays*, in cold cash or its equivalent. This could be called the illusion that the Book of Job was never written; or that classic tragedy, from the Greeks to Shakespeare, is un instructive; or that Christ never came to correct the popular Jewish notions of the nature and function of the Messiah. Or it could be called the illusion that the rich are rich because they are good and the poor are poor because they are bad.

The implication of Western middle-class prudential morality from the novelists Defoe and Richardson to Honesty-is-the-best-policy Franklin to How-to-win-friends Dale Carnegie is that goodness is worth while *because* it pays off, very tangibly, in the world's goods; the implication of the cross is that goodness must be ready if necessary to face crucifixion. How a notion not simply different from but diametrically opposed to the Christian idea could become identified in the popular mind as *the* Christian idea is difficult for us now to see, but that is exactly what happened. (In a "good cause," in part, of course: man always finds some good cause to justify what he wants to do, or must do: men were trying to "save" Christian morality in a time when it seemed that they had to dispense with Christian theology: the ethic seemed in need of "practical" underpinning.) In the middle west, at least, a very great many college freshmen coming from religious homes bring this illusion with them and believe they have encountered cynicism when the instructor points out some of the implications of Franklin's prudential maxims.

Needless to say, Hemingway's work is in direct conflict with any such interpretation of the ways of the world or of Providence. The good, as Frederick Henry realizes, die young, are broken by the world early. Only in some transcendent moral sense, with no cash value, are we ever among the "undefeated." Richardson has his Pamela remain shrewdly chaste until her "virtue" pays off in the form of a rich husband, but Hemingway's old fisherman must endure the sight of the sharks destroying his great fish. In contrast to the shallow frivolity, vulgarity, and mendacity of the dominant popular moral views of the last century and more, the pagan stoicism of Hemingway's works is tonic. No moral vision which sees fortitude and compassion in the key positions in the moral life is wholly out of harmony with historic Christian thinking. Hemingway's work tends to persuade us of the fundamental seriousness of the moral quest. To a thoughtful Christian the morality of his fiction will seem inadequate, and sometimes crude, but not often positively wrong. Jake Barnes has a lot to learn but, because he does not start by assuming that the essence of morality is a narrow calculation of advantage, he has not very much to unlearn.

Hemingway's fiction, then, in these and other ways that I have not named, represents for us a stage in the twentieth century rediscovery of Christianity among the educated. As I have tried briefly to suggest, it is sub-Christian, but not anti-Christian, in its effect—provided always that one defines *Christian* in historic, biblical creedal terms. Insofar as it may be said to chart the wasteland, it pre-

pare us, like Eliot's poem, to repent. Insofar as it may be said to constitute a positive search for a viable morality for our time, it takes us a part of the way toward a Christian morality. (Utilitarianism-pragmatism, in contrast, takes us off in a different direction, a direction likely to end everywhere, as it has already conspicuously ended in prominent parts of the world, in totalitarian nihilism.) Insofar as his work inculcates disillusion, the illusions it destroys, for the most part, were truly illusions and needed, as illusions always do, to be destroyed that our thinking might start from the truth.

A whole phase of history has run its course. If we are to be Christian in our thought today it can only be in the historic, "orthodox" sense. Which means that we may start from Hemingway's insights and go on from there, God willing, to a Christian commitment; but which also means that if we never reach Hemingway's insights we are unlikely ever to reach Christianity via the mind at all. We cannot, even if we wanted to, become Christian in Aunt Effie's way—or in Matthew Arnold's, either, though he was one of the saner minds of the nineteenth century. Hemingway's fiction marks a change of sensibility that, for us at least, is irreversible. Its implications are consistent with Sartre's atheist existentialism and, though less conspicuously so, with Kierkegaard's Christian existentialism; still less so, but partially, with Maritain's Thomism. A Christian is not shocked by the world Hemingway pictures, certainly not by the honest search for values that motivates his sympathetic characters—not, that is, unless his religion rests more on Emerson than on Christ. But pragmatic liberals find in his work little encouragement for their hope that man can get beyond tragedy by means of adult education or other "group-centered" experimental activities; and Marxists note with disapproval his "individualism," a deviation he shares with Christian thought.

Hemingway the man seems to think he hates Christianity. But the works of his imagination perform a real service for the cause of the faith. Even when they come into direct conflict with the historic faith they perform a service: they sharpen the issues, clarify the alternatives, cut away the fuzziness that gives us the illusion that we need not choose whom we will serve. In our day the road to Christian commitment is more likely to lead through despair than through affirmation. "The way up and the way down is one and the same." Christians should be grateful to Hemingway for the vision of the world which his work presents, whatever the final religious shortcomings and inadequacies of that vision.

The Testimony of William Faulkner

EDWIN A. PENICK, JR.



ANY A CASUAL READER occasionally lifts his eyes from the pages of William Faulkner with a sense of acute frustration. The devious sentences, writhing through jungles of lush verbiage, may inspire wonder that their author could ever have been awarded a prize for anything except deliberate obscurantism. But it is difficult for anyone to persevere in reading Faulkner's novels and short stories without gaining clearer comprehension of the complexities of the human situation, or without finding one's self-understanding deepened through the insights of this creative artist. For Faulkner—though in one sense a "contemporary American"—deals not merely with the convictions, traditions, and sentiments of the American scene, but with the world in microcosm. The men and women who come to life in his fiction speak and act as (first of all) human beings, who may happen, incidentally, to be contemporary Americans. Their words, thoughts, emotions, and actions shed light upon the massive universal problems that bear upon man's nature and behavior—such problems as the relationship of the self to its total environment, the character of man's freedom and his limitations, the extent of his responsibilities, his sense of guilt, the reality of human good and evil, the riddle of death. Through the medium of fiction, such questions, by becoming embodied and dramatized, achieve concretion and acquire "a local habitation and a name." It is, moreover, partly the nature of man's interpretation of and response to these crucial issues of life that determine the motivations and values, the beliefs and attitudes, the fears and aspirations, the threats and promises that help to characterize a particular era and culture. In what follows, then, I want to consider some of the words and thoughts and actions of men and women who have been given birth through a fictional medium—fictitious characters, to be sure, but in another sense real persons who have been endowed with a measure of autonomy, people engendered, analyzed, and dramatically presented in all their diversity through the skill of an artist of acknowledged merit. The expressed ideas and the behavior of these people cast light upon some of our cultural emphases and convictions—but only as these latter are set into that murky and vastly more intricate background which is humankind.

Most of Faulkner's writings can be discussed in terms of a particular human yearning that has once again acquired intense pertinence and poignancy in our contemporary era: the longing for assurance that human life has purposefulness,—the quest for meaning in human experience. Precise definition of the term "meaninglessness" is hard to come by. The word itself remains, nevertheless, painfully suggestive, pointing toward disillusionment, lack of purpose, cynical despair, a feeling of being senselessly "expendable," of being a tortured pawn in an idiotic game of hurt and sorrow and evil. Especially amid the turbid conditions of this

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century, disillusioned by the failure of human morality to keep abreast of the advance of technology, many men have come to wonder whether they may not have invested themselves and their world with a significance that simply is not there.

This corrosive threat of pointlessness in life stems partly from man's uncertainty with regard to ultimate values, and his uneasy designation of what is "good" and what is "evil." Professor Amos Wilder, in his helpful study of *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition*, recently referred to the "loss of absolutes in our world."¹ And some years ago, Professor Halford Luccock, thinking in a like vein, pertinently quoted from the angel Gabriel in *Green Pastures*: "Everything nailed down is comin' loose."² Yet moral discrimination of some variety continues to characterize mankind as a whole, however shifting and malleable the value-scales that are observed; and the literature of our day, as Dr. Luccock notes, reflects "a sharpened and deepened sense of evil"³ in human nature.

Many of Faulkner's characters wrestle strenuously with the problem of the indefinability of the evil that seems able to infiltrate the most admirable of human endeavors. What person is able to draw the fine line, for example, between the genuinely evil act and the act that wears merely the outer habiliments of evil? Is it wrong to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols? This is the problem confronted by the Reverend Gail Hightower of *Light in August*, as he seeks to dissuade his friend Byron Bunch from behavior that might be misinterpreted by the community. Byron protests: "There are secret things a man can do without being evil Reverend. No matter how they might look to folks." And Hightower replies: "I don't think that you could do anything that would be very evil, Byron, no matter how it looked to folks. But are you going to undertake to say just how far evil extends into the appearance of evil? Just where between doing and appearing evil stops?"⁴ The interlocking complexities of human relationships and the far-reaching consequences of nothing more than a mistaken inference make it extremely difficult to differentiate neatly between "the innocent flower" and "the serpent under it."

Faulkner perceptively notes, moreover, that at least part of the tragedy of human life is rooted in the strange ambiguities of motive and action, personal intention and social consequence. Men in our culture have usually found it imperative to establish certain relatively inflexible rules or laws which can not always take the more subtle motivations into account, but must judge the action as it stands. Tragedy often involves the sacrifice of one hope or ideal for the sake of another. And frequently arising out of the conflict of admirable motives and im-

¹Amos N. Wilder, *Modern Poetry and the Christian Tradition* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952), p. 50.

²Halford E. Luccock, *American Mirror* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941), p. v.

³*Ibid.*, p. 242.

⁴William Faulkner, *Light in August* (New York: New Directions, 1932), p. 289.

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molated ideals is the so-called "evil" action that inevitably contributes to man's suffering and guilt.

"Have you noticed [asks Mr. Compson in *Absalom, Absalom!*] how so often when we try to reconstruct the causes which lead up to the action of men and women, how with a sort of astonishment we find ourselves now and then reduced to the belief, the only possible belief, that they stemmed from some of the old virtues? The thief who steals not for greed but for love, the murderer who kills not out of lust but pity?"⁵

It assuredly seems that, throughout human history and experience, much of the cruelty perpetrated by man against his brothers has been levied in the name of "goodness." Ideals, criteria, motivations all seem hopelessly confused as they lead into human action; yet, for all that, something of value remains; and Faulkner, for one, flatly refuses to abandon belief in "the old universal truths," "the old verities" of "love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice"⁶—even while he acknowledges that these enduring values may don strange guises and cloak much that is evil.

"Ain't truth and justice the same thing," the sheriff said.

"Since when?" Uncle Gavin said. "In my time I have seen truth that was anything under the sun but just, and I have seen justice using tools and instruments I wouldn't want to touch with a ten-foot fence rail."⁷

Yet the interwoven texture of good and evil in human existence does not blind Faulkner to the ugliness, the monstrous irrationality, what C. S. Lewis refers to as the "bleak puerility,"⁸ that results when latent human potentialities for evil are actualized and concentrated within a single center of consciousness: "Dammit [says Horace Benbow in *Sanctuary*], say what you want to, but there's a corruption about even looking upon evil, even by accident; you cannot haggle, traffic, with putrefaction—"⁹

Faulkner's novels turn the fact of human evil before our eyes in such a way that its many facets reflect, with a sinister glint, the light of varying interpretation. Sometimes this "evil" is viewed as nothing more than an error in judgment, an offense against the conventionality of a ruthless and intolerant society. "I don't believe in sin," maintains Harry Wilbourne, in *The Wild Palms*. "It's getting out of timing. You are born submerged in anonymous lockstep with the teeming anonymous myriads of your time and generation; you get out of step once, falter once, and you are trampled to death."¹⁰

Or, occasionally, human evil appears to be virtually identified with sensuality. Such an idea partly reflects a dualistic conception of the universe which finds evil firmly rooted in the materialistic aspects of our world. But it is a valid insight that perceives a real relationship between man's perversity and his use

⁵William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (New York: Random House, 1951), p. 121.

⁶William Faulkner, "Nobel Prize Award," *Saturday Review of Literature*, February 3, 1951, p. 4.

⁷William Faulkner, "An Error in Chemistry," *Knight's Gambit* (New York: The New American Literary, 1950), p. 85.

⁸C. S. Lewis, *Perelandra* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946), p. 127.

⁹William Faulkner, *Sanctuary* (New York: The New American Library, 1931), p. 74.

¹⁰William Faulkner, *The Wild Palms* (New York: Penguin Books, Inc., 1939), p. 33.

of the physical senses. And in Joanna Burden of *Light in August*, to note but one example, we have a kind of personification of sensuality (in Reinhold Niebuhr's terms) as an "escape" through immersion in the vital processes of existence.¹¹ In her we see the corruption of a human being accomplished through the misuse of the physical senses; here is a person in the process of surrendering personhood, a rational being defiling soul and body, becoming degenerate, bestial, obscene.

Faulkner knows full well, too, that the evil that is in man is scarcely to be extricated from human pride and selfishness. This fundamental relationship is so thoroughly woven into his writing that a single quotation from one of his short stories should suffice for illustration. Gavin Stevens, referring to an expert magician who has used his craft to accomplish murder, comments:

"What else could the possession of such a gift as his have engendered, and the successful practising of it increased, but a supreme contempt for mankind? You told me yourself that he had never been afraid in his life."

"Yes," the sheriff said. "The Book itself says somewhere, *know thyself*. Ain't there another book somewhere that says, *Man, fear thyself, thine arrogance and vanity and pride*? You ought to know; you claim to be a book man. . . . What book is that in?"

"It's in all of them," Uncle Gavin said. "The good ones, I mean. It's said in a lot of different ways, but it's there."¹²

Sometimes evil is seen by Faulkner to spring from communal as well as from individual action. Sometimes it manifests itself in the shape of pharisaism. Or, again, it is prodigal in the midst of the bounties of Nature; or it denies to human beings the right of full personhood. But with this evil that Faulkner portrays is usually an authentic admixture of something good, an unrelinquished tendency toward the fulfillment of qualities that have been traditionally associated with the best in human potentiality and achievement. "People" [comments Temple Drake in Faulkner's *Requiem for a Nun*]. "They're really innately, inherently gentle and compassionate and kind. That's what wrings, wrenches . . . something. . . . The member of the mob who holds up the whole ceremony for seconds or even minutes while he dislodges a family of bugs or lizards from the log he is about to put on the fire."¹³

The threat of meaninglessness that haunts contemporary man and is rooted partly in a quicksand of shifting or competing values, partly in a morass of human evil that the easiest conscience can scarcely ignore, springs also out of the felt ambiguousness of man's status within the universe. It is in the sense of belonging to two worlds at once (as Reinhold Niebuhr has convincingly maintained) that much of the widespread human feeling of precariousness or frustration finds its inception. Man is fully creature, finite, limited; at the same time, he is capable of experiencing self-transcendence and is unable to disregard a persistent con-

¹¹Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946), Vol. I, p. 186.

¹²Faulkner, "An Error in Chemistry," *Knight's Gambit*, pp. 100f.

¹³William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (New York: Random House, 1950), p. 66.

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viction that he is a creature with a high destiny. "He stands at the juncture of nature and spirit; and is involved in both freedom and necessity."¹⁴ As Christopher Fry describes him, he is a "half-wit angel strapped to the back of a mule."¹⁵ Sometimes he seems to feel the physical restrictions of embodiment roll back momentarily, granting him brief glimpses of the vistas of eternity. Yet when he would shake off the impediments of creatureliness, he discovers that he is firmly rooted in the earth.

Faulkner is sensitive to those recurrent human experiences that whisper to men that they live on a knife-edge between two worlds. Take, as one example, the description in *Soldier's Pay* of the occasion on which the rector and Gilligan stroll at night past the doorway of a Negro church:

From it welled the crooning submerged passion of the dark race. It was nothing, it was everything; then it swelled to an ecstasy, taking the white man's words as readily as it took his remote God and made a personal Father of Him.

Feed Thy sheep, O Jesus. All the longings of mankind for a Oneness with Something, somewhere. . . .

Feed Thy sheep, O Jesus. The voices rose full and soft. . . .

They stood together in the dust, the rector in his shapeless black, and Gilligan in his new hard serge, listening, seeing the shabby church become beautiful with mellow longing, passionate and sad. Then the singing died, fading away along the mooned land inevitable with tomorrow and sweat, with sex and death and damnation; and they turned downward under the moon, feeling dust in their shoes.¹⁶

Joe Christmas, of Faulkner's *Light in August*, is a kind of living symbol of this tension that inevitably characterizes human life. For Christmas is indeed part-denizen of two worlds, full citizen of none. We are never told unequivocally whether or not Christmas is a "Negro"—a term which, defined in the context of the story's locale, would mean an individual "with a drop of Negro blood in his veins." Actually, it is unimportant whether he is a Negro on these tenuous terms or not. The point is that he is himself uncertain as to the identity of his "appropriate" community, and feels fully at home in none. The resultant frustration is acute. Christmas becomes embittered and antagonistic toward the whole race of mankind, and toward himself as well. He oscillates from one of his "worlds" to the other, finding rest and satisfaction in neither, and never able to escape the basic limitations that hem him in. The "white" and "black" blood, it is suggested, vie with one another in his veins, so that he becomes a bifurcated individual, at war with himself. In this way, he seems to epitomize (by analogy) the struggle of all men whose taut lives are stretched out in almost unbearable tension between two poles, an unrelieved tension that engenders most of man's suffering and much of his creativity. Christmas shares the lot of the finite individual who experiences yearnings toward infinity. "He felt like an eagle [Faulkner writes]: hard, sufficient, potent, remorseless, strong. But that passed, though he did not then know that, like the eagle, his own flesh as well as all space was still a cage."¹⁷

¹⁴Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 181.

¹⁵Christopher Fry, *A Sleep of Prisoners* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1951) p.

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¹⁶William Faulkner, *Soldiers' Pay* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1930), pp. 325f.

¹⁷Faulkner, *Light in August*, pp. 150f.

The fact of death, with its inevitability and accompanying ugliness, remains the supreme and inescapable reminder of man's finitude. In the face of a considerable deterioration of traditional Christian creeds, men still seek to counter the threat of meaninglessness which death constantly poses; and they speak of an immortality of memory or influence (there is more than a hint of this in Faulkner's *Sartoris*) or perhaps a kind of reabsorption of individual life into the ongoing vital processes of the universe (as in "The Bear"). But the apparent finality of death is not thus readily transmuted or escaped: Miss Rosa Coldfield (says Mr. Compson in *Absalom, Absalom!*) died

"... without pain they say, and whatever they mean by that since it has always seemed to me that the only painless death must be that which takes the intelligence by violent surprise and from the rear so to speak, since if death be anything at all beyond a brief and peculiar emotional state of the bereaved it must be a brief and likewise peculiar state of the subject as well. And if aught can be more painful to any intelligence above that of a child or an idiot than a slow and gradual confronting with that which over a long period of bewilderment and dread it has been taught to regard as an irrevocable and unplumbable finality, I do not know it."¹⁸

Another theme woven into the texture of Faulkner's writing and involved in the quest for meaning in life, is the admixture of freedom and determinism that characterizes human behavior. Faulkner consistently asserts that human beings are not by any means entirely free, that they make their choices and decisions within a context of community and time. He does not, I think—as some critics have contended—remove from his characters all genuine volition. Note, for example, the problem of the hero in "Mountain Victory": "I must move. I can't stay here, not even if I had a house, a roof to live under. So I have to choose between three things. That's what throws a man off—that extra alternative. Just when he has come to realize that living consists in choosing wrongly between two alternatives, to have to choose among three."¹⁹ Or, again, in "The Bear" one of the narrators remarks: "... Human beings always misuse freedom ... Apparently there is a wisdom beyond even that learned through suffering necessary for a man to distinguish between liberty and license. ..."²⁰ Man's freedom, then, is not portrayed here as an absolute freedom; and it is probably in the light of this fact that we must interpret another comment from the same story: "... No man is ever free and probably could not bear it if he were. ..."²¹ We do not, in effect, live in an historical vacuum. "The past is never dead," remarks Gavin Stevens. "It's not even past."²² In Faulkner's eyes, we are not simply hurled into life, naked, individualistic. Rather, we are products of a community that stretches over history's horizon. In our minds and bodies we reflect the myriad members of that historic fellowship and share the guilt of their sins; and no matter how deeply

¹⁸Faulkner, *Absalom!*, pp. 173f.

¹⁹William Faulkner, "Mountain Victory," *Collected Stories of William Faulkner* (New York: Random House, 1950), pp. 773f.

²⁰William Faulkner, "The Bear," *Go Down, Moses* (New York: Random House, 1942), pp. 289f.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 281.

²²Faulkner, *Requiem*, p. 92.

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we might yearn to repudiate this invisible past, it flows in our very veins and cannot be excised. So Faulkner's Ike McCaslin, though he might deny his birthright, can not escape the fact that his ancestors had held slaves, and that he shares the responsibility for the fruits of that ancient bondage, that "frail and iron thread strong beyond record and patrimony both to join him with the lusts and passions, the hopes and dreams and griefs, of bones whose names while still fleshed and capable even old Carothers' grandfather had never heard . . ."²³

Faulkner's emphasis upon fatality and doom is not altogether unharmonious with the temper of our times—times in which men often seem to experience the threat of a hostile universe and the sense of being overwhelmed by totally ungovernable forces. There are many occasions when man believes himself to be contending with what Faulkner refers to as an "Opponent," a "stage-manager," a "cosmic Joker," "blind mischance"—a malevolent or at best indifferent power before which man stands helpless. The universe seems full of trickery.

This pervasive fear that our total environment may be basically untrustworthy is only one of the manifestations of the spiritual perplexity of our time. We should perhaps remind ourselves, however, that such perplexity is no peculiarly contemporary phenomenon. Popular religion has nearly always reflected the multifarious character of man's spiritual experience, his struggle to understand his relationship to his Creator, his stumbling and fragmentary efforts to interpret and respond to the nature of the Divine. And the bewildering *mélange* of love and resentment, fear and hope, faith and doubt, religion and superstition, that partly comprises men's approach to God, manifests itself now and again in the fictional offspring of Faulkner and of other novelists. We dare not say, however, that the religious ideas and attitudes exhibited by these characters constitute the religious outlook of "modern man," but merely that they reflect the extraordinary complexity of the human religious situation.

Spiritual bewilderment seems to have increased as men have observed the organized Church to be permeated by selfish ambitions and interests. And those who are made aware of the divine-human encounter only through the medium of so-called "conventional" religion, may not come to know the God who can speak to their particular and pressing religious needs, and may seek to brush theism aside as an anachronism. God, they may decide, has become the private property of Church and clergy, and of a compartmentalized religion; and sensible people must put Him away as a childish thing, while they get on about the mundane business of living. Faulkner notes, for example (in *Light in August*), that young Joe Christmas's early experiences with the Church failed dismally to provide him with any confirmation of the pertinence of religion to everyday life: "He had seen work going on in the person of men with rakes and shovels about the playgrounds six days each week, but God had only occurred on Sunday. And then—save for

²³Faulkner, "The Bear," *Go Down, Moses*, p. 299.

the concomitant ordeal of cleanliness—it was music that pleased the ear and words that did not trouble the ear at all—on the whole, pleasant, even if a little tiresome.”²⁴ The spiritual confusion of many is rendered acute then, by a persistent conviction that religion and life may not intersect, but diverge. After all, as one of Faulkner’s characters remarks, you “. . . have to have some sense about religion and keep all these golden rules in the Sunday school paper where they come from.”²⁵ It is this kind of maintained division within human existence which is capable of isolating men from one another, of marshalling society into “ranks,” of relegating religion to the status of a class-luxury, enjoyed by the privileged who have time for it, while their less fortunate brethren slave to keep the harsh world of practicalities from taking them apart at the seams. A tableau of contrasts is summoned to mind by Faulkner’s description of a sheriff’s posse returning to town on a Sunday morning after a frenzied search for a murderer: “When they crossed the square the church bells were ringing, slow and peaceful, and along the streets the decorous people moved sedately beneath parasols, carrying Bibles and prayerbooks.”²⁶ Here two worlds brush one another, and the scrubbed face of a “conventional” Christianity turns delicately away from the sweat and mud and blood that are a part of human life. The hypocrisy that may sometimes underlie such situations, situations in which religious practices seem used as a blindfold to shut out the evil in the world, or even to provide sanction for man’s selfish exploitation of his neighbor, is flayed by the cynicism of McCord in *The Wild Palms*:

... Christmas, ... the apotheosis of the bourgeoisie, the season when with shining fable Heaven and Nature, in accord for once, edict and postulate us all husbands and fathers under our skins, when before an altar in the shape of a gold-plated cattle trough man may with impunity prostrate himself in an orgy of unbridled sentimental obeisance to the fairy tale which conquered the Western world, when for seven days the rich get richer and poor get poorer in amnesty: the white-washing of a stipulated week leaving the page blank and pristine again for the chronicling of the fresh . . . revenge and hatred.²⁷

If our contemporary culture is partly (though not uniquely) characterized by widespread spiritual confusion, it also suffers from what Professor Wilder has termed “the loss of roots in community.”²⁸ Here is still another factor contributing to man’s uneasy persuasion that life may be an accidental and basically senseless thing. Men hunger for love and yearn for forgiveness. Yet they are frequently so fearful of deception that they busily erect defenses that wall out the very compassion that they seek. Their self-encystment thus may engender isolation on the part of the larger community until the individual seems cast adrift in an alien society, lost, belonging nowhere. Closely akin to this “failure to belong” is a man’s self-persuasion that he is valueless, incapable of fulfilling any necessary function within the human community. Faulkner points to the sense of meaninglessness that derives from this “un-needed” status, in a reference to a group of Negroes,

²⁴Faulkner, *Light in August*, p. 457.

²⁵William Faulkner, “Fox Hunt,” *Collected Stories*, p. 602.

²⁶Faulkner, *Light in August*, p. 281.

²⁷Faulkner, *Wild Palms*, p. 76.

²⁸Wilder, *op. cit.*, p. 54.

freed by the Civil War from the visible bonds of their slavery, yet living like animals, in caves—"... not only with no one to depend on but with no one depending on them, caring whether they returned or not or lived or died or not: and that I suppose is the sum, the sharp serpent's fang, of bereavement and loss—..."²⁹

And so intimately related to the sense of "uselessness" as to be really just another aspect of it, is the profound feeling of boredom which frequently permeates man's experience in our culture, burdening him with doubts as to the ultimate value of existence. It is a feeling that seems to derive from continuing tedium coupled with a personal conviction that one is inescapably involved in insignificant and unnecessary activity, activity whose fruitlessness is intensified by constant repetition. Men demand something more of life than petty and endless routine, though, once more, such routine seems commonplace in our standardized and mechanized mass culture. Horace Benbow, in Faulkner's *Sanctuary*, expresses the acme of enervating boredom, as he describes how every week he has been accustomed to go to the railroad station to pick up a package of shrimp for his wife:

"... I have done it for ten years, since we were married. And I still don't like to smell shrimp... All the way home it drips and drips, until after a while I follow myself to the station and stand aside and watch Horace Benbow take that box off the train and start home with it, changing hands every hundred steps, and I following him, thinking Here lies Horace Benbow in a fading series of small stinking spots on a Mississippi sidewalk."³⁰

The "uprooting" process to which men in our society are subject, and which Dr. Wilder has noted as one of the specific earmarks of our western culture, serves to highlight the fact that a person normally develops within a natural environment. To exile man from many of the vital aspects of that environment may produce "selves" that have been peculiarly warped by those specific deprivations, and which we recognize as special products of our time. There is no blinking the fact that "modernity" sometimes has a tendency to abstract man from Nature, or to render Nature merely an object of selfish exploitation. These are not new tendencies, but they are given strong impetus by the scientism and materialistic emphases that impart a strong flavor to our culture. For Faulkner, the appropriate development of man within the matrix of Nature is today the rare exception; too many human beings, he suggests, are now synthetic creatures, manufactured from cheap and shoddy material; and the old codes of an innate, though crude, humaneness are being obliterated by the flint-hearted agents of so-called "progress." Waste and selfishness mark the passage of this accelerating culture. And Faulkner grieves for the passing of a time when Nature was loved and respected, rather than wrung dry.

A mile back [he writes] he had left the rich, broad, flat river-bottom country and entered the hills—a region which topographically was the final blue and dying echo of the Appalachian mountains. Chickasaw Indians had owned it, but after the Indians it had been cleared where possible for cultivation, and after the Civil War, forgotten save by small peripatetic sawmills which had vanished too now, their sites marked only by the mounds of rotting sawdust which were not only their gravestones but the monuments of a people's heedless greed.³¹

²⁹William Faulkner, *The Unvanquished* (New York: Random House, 1938), pp. 177f.

³⁰Faulkner, *Sanctuary*, p. 10.

³¹William Faulkner, *The Hamlet* (New York: Random House, 1940), p. 196.

Such waste becomes doubly senseless with recognition of the fact that there is a point beyond which possession of material goods fails to satisfy the deepest yearnings of the human soul. Wealth, as Faulkner's character Ira Ewing demonstrates, can not in itself fortify one against the tensions and pressures of what has been termed our "aspirin age." Ewing "... had come a long way ... from that barren and treeless village which he had fled by night freight to where he now lay in a hundred-thousand-dollar house, waiting until he knew that he could rise and go to the bath and put the two aspirin tablets into his mouth."³²

Faulkner seems to imply that more and more, in an increasingly secular culture, men are wilfully losing sight of the real values and depths of life, solacing themselves with petty bodily comforts and a modicum of physical security—unaware that at any moment a curtain of oblivion may descend between them and all their little goods. Wilbourne, in *The Wild Palms*, catches himself thinking:

"I want my wife to have the best" exactly like any husband with his Saturday pay envelope and his suburban bungalow full of electric wife-saving gadgets and his table cloth of lawn to sprinkle on Sunday morning provided he is not fired or run down by a car in the next ten years—the doomed worm blind to all passion and dead to all hopes and not even knowing it, oblivious and unaware in the face of all darkness, all unknown, the underlying all-Derisive bidding to blast him.³³

Despite Faulkner's increasing use of Christian symbolism, I am very reluctant to suggest the presence in his novels of traditional elements of Christian "redemption" or "regeneration"; it somehow seems more appropriate to speak of suggested means for alleviating man's plight, or of affirmations that human life is not without enduring significance.

Faulkner, through his characters, apparently acknowledges the right of men to worship God; and in his direct public statements he sometimes voices a kind of theistic (or perhaps deistic) creed. He reveals, from time to time, his sympathetic understanding of the warmth and motivating power of a simple Christian faith. He stands in awe and reverence before a kind of abstract Truth that he finds existent in the universe. And mindful of the grandeur of the natural world, he sometimes seems to hint that man may be mystically related to the indestructible surge of Nature's vitality. But his faith and hope appear to reside primarily in the human race itself. The future of mankind he sees securely held in the hands of those perceptive individuals who recognize the values that render human life what it is supposed to be, and who—in the face of strong, deterministic forces—responsibly exercise such freedom as is theirs, in the interest of preserving and maintaining those values. Faulkner's men and women, then, often find life's meaning to be centered not in a divine-human relationship, but in their own ability to exercise their virtues and fulfill their noblest potentialities. In his Commencement Address at Pine Manor Junior College in 1953, Faulkner stated:

³²William Faulkner, "Golden Land," *Collected Stories*, p. 702.

³³Faulkner, *Wild Palms*, p. 68.

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In the beginning, God created the earth. . . . Then he created man completely equipped to cope with the earth. . . . Then God stopped. It was not an experiment. God didn't believe in man. He knew man. He knew that man was competent for a soul because he (man) was capable of saving that soul. He knew that man was capable of saving not only his soul but himself. . . .³⁴

God stands remotely in the shadows here; and it is that lofty capacity of the human spirit to actualize transcendent values which is seen to extend to mankind a hope for survival and perhaps for eventual triumph:

What is wrong with this world is [continued the Address], it's not finished yet. . . . It is not completed to that point where man can put his final signature to the job and say, "It is finished. We made it and it works." Because only man can complete it. Not God, but man. It is not only man's high destiny, but proof of his immortality, too, that his is the choice between ending the world . . . and completing it.³⁵

In the persons of Faulkner's "Tall Men" we encounter fictional embodiment of what the author apparently considers to be the noblest capacities of man. The stature of these men is measured in terms of their courage and integrity. There is pride here, too—not arrogance but a firm self-reliance tempered with humility and with the self-discipline that acknowledges the inability of the individual to "conquer" life single-handed. Again, here is implicit expression of the value of community, community in which both authority and obedience are pervaded by love. And here is also acceptance, without bitterness, of circumstance that will not conform to the pattern of individual desire.

Faulkner represents the "Tall Men" as being members of a small minority, elements of the "old order:" "...these here curious folks living off here to themselves, with the rest of the world all full of pretty neon lights burning night and day both, and easy, quick money scattering itself around everywhere for any man to grab a little, and every man with a shiny new automobile already wore out and thrown away and the new one delivered before the first one was even paid for. . . ." ³⁶ Men may, from time to time, it is true, allow neglect or indifference to atrophy the qualities that define their greatness; but the sharp exigencies of human existence can serve to restore those qualities once again.

"... Yes, sir [remarks one of Faulkner's characters]. We done forgot about folks. Life has done got cheap, and life ain't cheap. Life's a pretty durn valuable thing. I don't mean just getting along from one WPA relief check to the next one, but honor and pride and discipline that make a man worth preserving, make him of any value. That's what we got to learn again. Maybe it takes trouble, bad trouble, to teach it back to us. . . ." ³⁷

It is within such persons as "The Tall Men," Faulkner implies, then, that we see human nature behaving as it was intended to behave. And perhaps mankind as a whole, he suggests, possesses inherent capacities for achievement which will continue to be fulfilled from time to time, and which will succeed in transfiguring life despite widespread degeneracy and blindness:

³⁴Quoted in *Time*, LXI, (June 22, 1953), p. 43.

³⁵*Ibid.*

³⁶William Faulkner, "The Tall Men," *Collected Stories*, pp. 57f.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 60.

[God] presaw [comments Faulkner] . . . the long annal of the men and women who have anguished over man's condition and who have held up to us not only the mirror of our follies and greeds and lusts and fears, but have reminded us constantly of the tremendous shape of our godhead too . . . of our capacity for honor and courage and compassion and pity and sacrifice.³⁸

For Faulkner recognizes something in man that he speaks of as immortal spirit—not merely consciousness, but a kind of enduring, value-preserving core of being, which utilizes the physical aspect of life even while transcending it, and which aims with a kind of deliberate thrust toward a destiny that can not be defined in terms of the sensory alone. Man himself may so debase that spirit that it no longer exhibits the characteristics of true humanity. But for the most part, the lure of something beyond sheer finitude finds a receptive response within man's heart, and gives him hope that his ephemeral passage is not the total meaning of existence.

"... Surely [remarks one of Faulkner's characters] *there is something in . . . even the demoniac, which Satan flees, aghast at his own handiwork, and which God looks on in pity—some spark, some crumb to leaven and redeem that articulated flesh, that speech sight hearing taste and being which we call human man.*"³⁹

Critics are busily taking note of the fact that Christian symbols and beliefs are increasingly making their appearance in each successive Faulkner novel. This certainly seems to be true. Temple Drake, for example, in *Requiem for a Nun*, yearns for forgiveness and seeks for: "Anyone to save my soul. Anyone who wants it. If there is none, I'm sunk. We all are. Doomed. Damned." "Of course we are [her uncle replies]. Hasn't He been telling us that for going on two thousand years?"⁴⁰

But precisely what Faulkner is trying to convey through this use of Christian terms and symbols is not always easy to understand. I, for one, can not believe that he is modifying his ultimate faith in man in favor of some vague brand of supernaturalism that might conceivably imperil the vitality of human endeavor or seriously threaten that primary status that man appears to enjoy in the universe of Faulkner's imagination. Faulkner has, in the past, frequently celebrated the human ability to endure—the terrible and noble capacity to bear all suffering. The theme is not absent from his most recent work, *A Fable*, but rather seems to be interlaced with suggestions of triumph and a kind of deathlessness even in the face of mankind's tragic imperfections. But one can only approach this latest ambitious product of Faulkner's genius in something of the spirit of awe and uncertainty with which the children of Israel drew near to Mount Sinai; for this novel (like the holy mount) is shrouded in smoky obscurities, while thunder and lightning glance amongst its peaks.

It would not be easy, nor, I think, desirable, to try to assign Faulkner to a particular theological school of thought. Elements of humanism, deism, stoicism,

³⁸Faulkner, Commencement Address at Pine Manor Junior College, quoted in *Time*, LXI (June 22, 1953), p. 43.

³⁹Faulkner, *Absalom!* p. 166.

⁴⁰Faulkner, *Requiem*, p. 286.

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fatalism, nature mysticism, and a host of other creeds have crept into or even dominated his writings. And, of course, in *A Fable*, Christian symbolism is on all sides. Theological labels are not really of much use to us here; and perhaps, for many, that is a fact to be accepted with appropriate thanks. I confess that I find myself in wholehearted agreement with Edmund Fuller when he says: "... I see no reason why Faulkner is obligated to have a theology. He is an artist who here says to us profound and searching things about the actual character of man and the possible nature of God. These we take gratefully and relate to our own theology as may be necessary."⁴¹

Faulkner is not an easy author to read. But those who seek a deepened understanding of the human situation cannot afford to ignore him. Under his pen, all the inconsistency and spontaneity—and tragedy—that is man, springs into life, is momentarily focussed and held up before our eyes. Perhaps it is true, as Faulkner himself suggests, that "... it is only in literature that the paradoxical and even mutually negating anecdotes in the history of a human heart can be juxtaposed and annealed by art into verisimilitude and credibility."⁴²

⁴¹Edmund Fuller, "No Hidden Allusions," *Episcopal Churchnews* (September 19, 1954), p. 33.

⁴²William Faulkner, "Monk," *Knight's Gambit*, p. 34.

Hawthorne Seen in a Steeple

BERNARD DUFFEY



KNOW OF NO RECORD that either Emerson or Thoreau ever in his life climbed a steeple. Perhaps there was no need, each being sufficiently a steeple to himself. But among the familiar writings of Nathaniel Hawthorne, one dating from early in his career, is the sketch entitled "Sights From A Steeple" in which the romancer gives details of such an enterprise. To judge from the journal-entry parallel to his sketch, the climb, real or fictional, had been induced more by reason than by idle curiosity, a reason not often invoked by students of Hawthorne's imagination.

The ideas of people are not raised higher than the roofs of the houses. All their interests extend over the earth's surface in a layer of that thickness. The meeting-house steeple rises out of their sphere.

More often, the Hawthorne critic's image has been one of plumbing depths, of unraveling skeins, or of staring into haunted mirrors—images which picture Hawthorne as brooding and inward and volcano-like, though inhibited from eruptions, his vital center at a distance below the surface and out of sight. If, however, one reverse such an order, utilizing the steeple-climb for the suggestion most evident in it, that of a transcendent rise, what then could be made of the ambiguity of significance which runs through the romancer's work like some life-long thread of the Fates themselves?

The steeple image is not alone in the hint it gives. Indeed, an insistence upon aloof loneliness pervades all of Hawthorne's comments upon himself. In his sketch of the creator of "Rappacini's Daughter," M. de l'Audepine, he notes that "his very name is unknown to many of his own countrymen as well as to the student of foreign literature," and that "he seems to occupy an unfortunate position between the Transcendentalists (who, under one name or another have their share in all the current literature of the world) and the great body of pen and ink men who address the sympathies and intellect of the multitude,"—a station, it would seem, very congruent to one of such mixed understandings as to climb a steeple in order to descry more nearly the affairs of earth. Equally and regularly, the chief characters of Hawthorne's romances find themselves suspended, with greater or lesser degrees of accommodation, between the poles of an exalted if solitary triumph on the one hand, and the demands of common reality on the other. In the short stories and sketches the pattern remains much the same, though it is given various statements. Whether it be the sensitive young revelers of Merry Mount, Young Goodman Brown, or that most desolate of all pilgrims, Ethan Brand, the human soul as seen by Nathaniel Hawthorne must suffer the same fate. Rooted in the earth, it will aspire to a heaven it can never reach, gaining instead the hell that is its own

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alienation from kind. It is fated to climb a steeple, under the impression that it is achieving an ecstasy, and fated to find at the top of the ladder, if it ascends so far, only a blind pinnacle. Whatever the level, its doom is an ironic one. Hester Prynne and the subjects of Dr. Heidigger's experiment suffer essentially the same fate. The difference lies only in the degree of their inward acceptance and understanding.

Hawthorne's steeple and the "heart" he wrote about often share this figuring of an individual doom, though they suggest different directions for its consummation. The author's problem, he was to say, was "to open an intercourse with the world." This was the presumed difficulty of one who had spent twelve years at largely solitary labor in Salem. But his conscience was not at peace in the matter; otherwise, perhaps, the difficulty would have been less. His instincts, by his own declaration, were those of a man whose talk with his own mind and soul "could hardly have failed to be more deeply valuable" than the productions, compromised in this regard, to which he had turned. It may be, however, that Hawthorne held a more rarefied soul-discourse than he imagined, that what shaped his writing was not so much a necessity for speaking to and among other men, but the inevitability with which it became the inner monologue of a solitary heart, or conversely, the ruminations of one who having climbed his steeple was now stuck in it.

Much has been written about Hawthorne's art, about his theory of romance, about his commitment to allegory, about the cultivated ambiguity with which he reports the detail of his stories. Was Mistress Hibbins really a witch? Or did Hester just suffer a temporary delusion? Did the letter on the minister's breast grow there through some divine agency? Was it a self-inflicted wound? Was it produced by Chillingworth's black art? Or was it just a figment of someone's imagination? No answer was possible, and none, by declaration, was wanted. In the whole tenuous web of Hawthorne's craft there lay the same contradiction that colored his description of himself as a writer, that ran through all his major characters and situations—an almost compulsive yen for irresolution, suspension, for duality. He was in his fashion the Mr. Facing-Both-Ways of his admired John Bunyan. Sympathetic critics, perhaps following Warren and Matthiesen, have been prone to fashion apologies for Hawthorne's art that see in it some achievement of the more fully developed dramatic symbolism of Melville, James, or Eliot, and we have had thus some rather inchoate efforts to equate his allegory in kind with the symbolism of these other writers. But Hawthorne's art suffered a division of understanding within itself as to which way it should go. *Billy Budd*, on the other hand, or *The Wings of the Dove*, or *Murder in the Cathedral* are obsessed more with the world, objectively if you will and realistically, than with their author's torments. They may be described as earth-bound; two of them, perhaps, are God-intoxicated; they are not, at any rate, splitting the difference in the steeples of their authors' souls. The symbols of Melville, James, or Eliot suggest difficulties which pass defining. Hawthorne's symbols suggest, rather, difficulties

which pass endurance—those of a man who would make the shadows of his own mind serve duty as the substance of life itself.

Hawthorne might, in circumstances other than those of the nineteenth century New England, have given us a *Don Juan*, a *City of Dreadful Night*, or even a *Fleurs du Mal*. He could not, I think, on that basis have achieved either the trenchant human solidity of James or the equally trenchant spiritual solidity of Eliot. He was too distrustful of both at once, for either would have meant abandoning the fetish he had made of the individual, the agonizingly solitary human heart.

Purify that inward sphere, and the many shapes of evil that haunt the outward, and which now seem almost our only realities, will turn to shadowy phantoms and vanish of their own accord; but if we go no deeper than the intellect, and strive, with merely that feeble instrument, to discern and rectify what is wrong, our whole accomplishment will be a dream, so unsubstantial that it matters little whether the bonfire, which I have so faithfully described, were what we choose to call a real event and a flame that would scorch the viewer, or only a phosphoric radiance and parable of my own brain.

Whence comes this vitiating agnosticism as to whether a fire burns in itself or in the dream world of its beholder? Whence this persuasion of the reality of only a reflexive awareness? In answer, we resort to another metaphysically based paragraph conveniently thus juxtaposed to Hawthorne's and often, in its implications, taken as the contradiction of all the latter's views. Our present purpose, however, is to insist upon a similarity.

Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place the divine providence has found for you, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so and confided themselves child-like to the genius of their age betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy was seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being.

Two counsels of perfection. One says "trust," the other "purify." Yet both lead directly to an inner sphere of consciousness rather than an outer sphere of existence, and both say, put your hope here. One is no less idealistic than the other. Only in the degree of hope do they differ. If Emerson exclaims at victory while Hawthorne broods on defeat, both are encompassed equally in the ironies of condition inseparable from the very heart they had to trust. Honesty was a possible policy for Hawthorne, one most closely approximated by that heroic sufferer, Hester Prynne. "Be true! be true! be true! Show freely to the world, if not your worst, yet some trait whereby the worst may be inferred." But such honesty seemed closer to exhibitionism than to contrition and amendment, and the advice brought no real encouragement to a man removed, whether into a steeple or into the depths of his own heart, for who was there in such places to make inference or even to witness revelation?

It is at this point, perhaps, that one is most inclined to take exception to the critical commonplaces on Hawthorne's use of puritanism: that he was in any genuine sense a thinker who had returned to the moral attitude of his ancestors in order to appropriate it against the romantic self-regard of his contemporaries. It is indeed true that he supplied to Puritanism a tone of his own shading made

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up of misty and twilight colors, but, like everything else, Puritanism was beyond the possibility of community to anyone for whom the world was only awareness, who shared, if only to the extent of a steeple-climb, the transcendental drive of a latter-day New England. Whatever in his somber loneliness Hawthorne took from Puritanism was not of its religious essence.

In *The Application of Redemption by the Effectual Work of the Word and the Spirit of Christ*, Thomas Hooker had written of the cure of wandering thoughts. Perhaps surprisingly, though Hooker spoke to a condition of melancholy not far removed from Hawthorne's own, he yielded little of the stern chiding which Hawthorne had imagined from such a worthy in his own preface to the *Scarlet Letter*. "What is he? murmurs one gray shadow of my forefathers to the other. 'A writer of story books! What kind of a business in life,—what mode of glorifying God, or being serviceable to mankind in his day and generation,—may that be? Why, the degenerate fellow might as well have been a fiddler!'" This indeed was a nineteenth century romantic, one with a bad conscience about "the business of life," rather than a seventeenth century Puritan. And whatever may have been the state of Hawthorne's conscience in regard to glorifying God and serving mankind, his concern for these issues grew from the intensively cultivated soil of romantic inwardness rather than the freer ground of a Puritan regard for Deity.

Cure these inordinate and raging lusts,

Hooker had declared, with an almost over-hearty common-sense,

and thence wil follow a still and quiet composure of mind; purge the stomach if it be foul, and that wil ease the pain of wind in the Head, because that is caused by the fumes that arise from thence. Take off the plummet, or lessen but the weight of it, the minutes though they hurried never so fast before yet wil not move at all, or at least very slowly and quietly. So here, take off the poysse of the affections, purge away these noysom lusts which carry and command the head, and send up dunghil steams which distemper the mind, and disturb it, and those windy imaginations wil cease and those thoughts of the mind like the minutes, either wil not move, or move in order and manner as may help and not hinder. . . .

It is Hawthorne who despairs, not Hooker, for it is Hawthorne who reduces the world to the self-imagined compass of the human heart, displacing in the process the remedies of the older thinker. Hooker, because he acknowledged nature independently, could see the cure of melancholy in a trimming of the soul like that of the pendulum of a clock. Here, as elsewhere, Hawthorne's pessimism exceeds that of its supposed source radically, in kind, just as, for Hawthorne (in common with his Concord contemporaries) creation had shrunk from any of the fullness of the earth which is the Lord's to the narrow limits set to a steeple top of self. Hawthorne had left in his ascent the theological ground of his forebears, and the grievousness of the loss to him can be measured in the shadow-like obscurity of much of his writing. Melancholy indeed. But not one to be defined, much less to be apprehended in faith or imagination or knowledge; rather an evil of which the only corollary could be suffering, the passive endurance of an inevitable doom. The

Concord hope was restricted to romantic vision-making, and Hawthorne's visions were mostly troubled ones.

A suggestion in this regard lies implicit in a University of Upsala monograph by Miss Jane Lundblad, "Nathaniel Hawthorne and European Literary Tradition," which argues that Hawthorne was more deeply indebted to the tradition of European romanticism than his American critics have usually perceived and that, especially, he borrowed from the technique of the Gothic romance in his own romances and tales. Among these characteristic devices, one especially has an important bearing upon our present point. As the eighteenth-century North European romantic had expropriated the Catholic past of his own culture to provide an apparatus for his tales in keeping with his own bizarre temperament, and without particular regard for the nature of that past itself, so, we may argue, did Hawthorne largely treat the Puritanism of his own New England past. The Puritans were no doubt closer to Hawthorne than was medieval Catholicism to the Gothicists. New England had always set great store by the individual will. But however clear a line of descent may be traced from the soteriological emphasis of the earlier faith to Hawthorne's own preoccupation with the romantic damnation of souls, the difference is important. The romancer's puritans were most commonly conceived for their romantic possibilities rather than their puritanical substance. They were devils in disguise; they were "priests"; they were hypocrites; they were zealots of despair, everything which Puritanism anathematized, but everything which Hawthorne the romancer cherished. Hawthorne's damnations, like those of the Gothic story tellers, existed in a world for which ghosts were the highest supernatural reality and from which the faith, hope, and charity required by a real world had fled the pre-empting self.

The meetinghouse steeple, Hawthorne had said, rose out of the common people's sphere. It shot away from earth, away from mankind, but it achieved only privacy. Hawthorne attempted the climb, gained his station, and suffered melancholy. He had become a solitary eyeball, but one unable to focus. "I have climbed high," he at first exults. But then immediately, "My reward is small." The first response, however, was for more climbing. "Oh that I could soar up into the very zenith, where man never breathed, nor eagle ever flew, and where the ethereal azure melts away from the eye and appears only a deepened shade of nothingness." But such a consummation, one in which existence and non-existence were finally made one, was too dreadful and too absolute.

Though Hawthorne drew back from the nihilism lying at the end of Emerson's road, his sketch could not get him out of his steeple. "The most desirable mode of existence might be that of a spiritualized Paul Pry, hovering invisible round men and women, witnessing their deeds, searching into their hearts, borrowing brightness from their felicity and shade from their sorrow, and retaining no emotion peculiar to himself." And no being. "But none of these things are possible;

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and if I would know the interior of brick walls, or the mystery of human bosoms, I can but guess." Here was a root for the uncertainties of Hawthorne's allegory common to all his ambiguities, profound and trivial alike. The question might be that of Hester Prynne's guilt or of a young man seen from the steeple, "Is he in doubt, or in debt? Is he, if the question be allowable, in love? Does he strive to be melancholy and gentleman-like? Or is he merely overcome by the heat?" No answer in either case was possible. "There are," he declared, "broad thoughts struggling in my mind, and, were I able to give them distinction, they would make their way in eloquence." All reality, however, lay too far from him for eloquence. The threatening storm momentarily suggested a resolution, "I will descend." But a last glance held him in the dreadful anxiety, "A little speck of azure has widened in the western heavens; the sunbeams find a passage and go rejoicing through the tempest; and on yonder darkest cloud, born, like hallowed hopes, of the glory of another world and the trouble and tears of this, brightens forth the Rainbow!" On this transcendent figure, sliding over the exacting requirements of full analogy, ends "Sights from a Steeple"; its author, half drawn to earth, is yet stayed by a combined promise and threat in the sky. We have come round to the image we began with and to a conclusion it suggests.

Hawthorne was as much a child of his time and place as any of his transcendental contemporaries. He, along with them, had learned something of the idealist's vision and hope. He had, after all, gone to Brook Farm before he left it. He was devoted to Sophia Peabody, whose idealism was as exalted as anyone's in Concord. His writing, repeatedly, dealt with the kind of tragedy which grows best out of idealism, the tragedy of the frustrated self. But here, instead of a moral influence from Puritanism, lay the defeat implicit in idealistic psychology, the discovery of the steeple climber that his quest for exalted selfhood involves an alienation; that self, be it heart or mind, when made the only object, reduces everything to its own limits and subjects them to its own frustrations. Having stayed in the steeple, Hawthorne was removed from both Heaven and earth; phantoms must be his portion. Emerson, more blithe, could cut loose and arrive at whatever heights he wished, untroubled by the world which had, after all, only to be thought back into rightness by the *esemplastic* reason. For the Melville of *Billy Budd*, the world and its wrongs were omnipotent except for those virtuous spirits like Billy or Captain Vere whose wills still were free and who could, consequently, reach out and grasp their destinies to condemn or forgive as they alone might resolve. For Hawthorne, there was the unqualified good toward which the steeple pointed, but to which it could not attain, and the lumpish world from which it rose. His final literary subject was that of the unhappiness of suspension from both equally.

It will be well to ground our conclusion in Hawthorne's own view of these matters as he stated them in "The Old Manse." They are all there. His rejection of the world and its business, his qualms of conscience about such a rejection,

his delight in transcendent freedom, his dislike of Transcendentalists, his sympathy with the tenor of Emerson's views, his rejection of orthodoxy as a long dead letter, and, finally, his sad sense of frustration as writer and as man. There was, he says in effect, so much to be hoped for and so little of realization.

The treasure of intellectual good which I hoped to find in our secluded dwelling had never come to light. No profound treatise of ethics, no philosophic history, no novel even, that could stand unsupported on its edges. All that I had to show, as a man of letters, were these few tales and essays, which had blossomed out like flowers in the calm summer of my heart and mind. . . . With these idle weeds and withering blossoms I have intermixed some that were produced long ago,—old, faded things, and reminding me of flowers pressed between the leaves of a book,—and now offer the bouquet, such as it is, to any whom it may please. These fitful sketches, with so little of external life about them, yet claiming no profundity of purpose,—so reserved even while they sometimes seem so frank, often but half in earnest, and never, even when most so, expressing satisfactorily the thoughts which they profess to image,—such trifles, I truly feel, afford no solid basis for a literary reputation. Nevertheless, the public—if my limited number of readers, whom I venture to regard rather as a circle of friends, may be termed a public—will receive them the more kindly, as the last offering, the last collection of this nature which it is my purpose ever to put forth. Unless I could do better, I have done enough in this kind.

The romancer, we would maintain, has here assessed more usefully and exactly than his latter-day critics the expense both to his imagination and moral faculty of denying them any objects apart from their own fantasies.

Hawthorne, we have been told, restored to the New England vision the image of evil, and so the image of reality, which Unitarian and Transcendentalist had stripped from it. However, another estimate might suggest that what Hawthorne found for literary capital was more his own insistent loneliness than the real existence of evil, and that from such capital he made personal testimony rather than creative symbol. If his moral concern was suffering, his literary concern was the allegory necessary both to disguise and express it. His common theme was endurance, but on that ground he has illogically been given the accolade due the moral and poetic maker. Hawthorne's symbols, though they evoke the image of his own or his reader's frustrated heart or mind and so tantalize precisely as would a mirror haunted only by the images of ghosts, surely stir little excitement or conviction in themselves. Their author would liken them to withered flowers. In this view, apart from the sadness they suggest, they are endemic to Concord. They claim only a transcendental reality. But a poetic symbol can scarcely exist without the freedom of its own being. It is something other than an expression of the inverted will of its framer.

Like Emerson and Thoreau, like any of the exemplars of transcendentalism whom he criticized, Hawthorne stood alone in the steeple which he had ascended so early in his life. And this steeple, for him as for the others, was that solitary aspiration toward heaven which rose from the peaked roof of every proper New England meetinghouse. Below were gathered a temporary congregation of discrete souls, unitarian in character as well as theology, while only in the surrounding churchyard lay buried the strange if familiar dead. It was not, however, toward

HAWTHORNE SEEN IN A STEEPLE

these last that Hawthorne turned his face. He struggled to make out the living at their great distance from him, but his vantage had been gained at such cost that detail was blurred and identity lost. To come down from the steeple was unthinkable unless he was willing to sacrifice the aloof perspective, with a hint of the rainbow, which his climb had given him. To remain, was to condemn himself inexorably to loneliness, to a riddling out of events so far off they scarcely seemed real, and to anxiety about the coming storm. Here, in self-aspiration and the frustration of self, Hawthorne took his station mustering what resolution was necessary to image his situation. His attitude could not be a tragic one—it was too remote and too circumscribed in its elevation—though it did afford glimpses of human failure and folly. Nor at his distance could he make any use of the illustrious dead who lay beneath him, those tenants of the earth upon which his steeple was built but above which it rose so fatally far, except to note that they too had known folly and failure. They, however, had called them sin and had used them more firmly to measure the distance they had fallen from God's own state of creation, a distance which, in God's grace, would be reclaimed. To Hawthorne, folly and failure were irredeemably darkening colors of the human landscape to be especially noted and felt by those like himself, or perhaps Conrad's Kurtz, who stood so alone in a wilderness. "The Horror!" was their exclamation. But they held on, none the less fascinated, none the less victims of a pride consumed in its own aspirations and divorced, finally, from any free sphere of creativity, symbolic or immediate.

NOTE

The quotations from "Sights from a Steeple" are taken from the sketch by this title in *Twice-Told Tales*, Volume I of Hawthorne's *Works*, The Riverside Press, Cambridge, 1899, pages 207-214.

The Responsibility of Higher Education in Society

J. EDWARD DIRKS



TWO PRIMARY CHALLENGES motivate the work of the Commission on Christian Higher Education. These derive from the relationship between the academic communities and the Church. The first of these is the challenge which consists of the needs, the everyday concerns, and the objectives of Christian persons and of Christian groups in all institutions of higher learning. The Commission's task is a ministry, devoted to arousing, sustaining, and deepening the sense of Christian vocation in the whole range of the academic life. It is designed to help those who seek to know what it means to serve God in Christian obedience as they undertake an understanding of the concrete problems of the college and university campus, of the foundations which are laid in faith for the intellectual enterprise, and of the pastoral responsibilities which are laid upon those who make their Christian witness in the dialogue of the academic enterprise.

This cannot be limited to a concern with so-called "religious" problems and "religious" issues. If we so limit the scope of work, we separate between the "religious" and the "secular" concerns. This perpetuates a false dichotomy; this permits us to do only yesterday's job. Rather, the inclusive task is one which calls us to provide and sustain the relationships, the assurances, and the instruments by which Christian community is made effective and by which creative academic work is made possible. In addition, the inclusive challenge demands that we assist in delineating the basis of a constructive evangelistic thrust which is at the same time true to the integrity of higher education. This demands that a theoretical knowledge of our faith is brought into conjunction with a sensitivity to contemporary culture in such a way that the spark is provided to ignite a significant dialogue both within the lives and thoughts of persons and of communities of Christians. To some this will come as a necessary disturbance of complacency; to others it will come as the welcome reassurance that the Christian faith is indeed relevant to the pursuit of truth. In any event, to all persons who seek to pursue a Christian obedience on the campus, true evangelism must help persons to listen and to hear what both their faith and their culture are saying, to speak forth what is heard, and to work for what is said. Using the phrase which was recently expressed by Adlai Stevenson, it is not only Americans, but also Christians, who need more than anything else hearing aids.

To speak relevantly and in new terms to the Christian community in higher education is the primary task of such a Commission as ours. But it is not our sole task. We cannot stop here, because even this task is one whose dimensions are unclear until we see it in a broader and more fundamental perspective.

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The second task to which we are called is to discover the authentic Christian bases and implications of the responsibility which higher education has in the world of society and human culture. It may be claimed that Christians cannot hear the full call of God to them in the colleges and universities until they seek to know His will for the institutions of higher learning in the world. It is in the needs and challenges of society that God calls the academic enterprise to its high and unique vocation; here the community of inquiry must serve Him, if indeed it would serve Him at all. We can well remind ourselves here of two axioms which were stated last August by Philippe Maury of the World's Student Christian Federation.¹ The first is this: the college and university belong to the world, not to the Church. These institutions live in relation to the needs of the world, they belong to the human community, and they are involved in the human quest. This is true in a basic sense as well for the church-related college as it is for the public institution; it is true, moreover, not despite the church-relationship, but because of it. The second axiom is implied in the first: the college and university cannot be substitutes for the Church, responsible for preaching the Christian gospel. The primary function of higher education is the corporate pursuit of knowledge, the arousing and maintaining of vital intellectual inquiry and the sustaining of the open dialogue in which the total concerns of man—his knowledge, faith, work, and relationships—can be explored. We must not be afraid to admit that the Church violates its own true purposes with respect to higher education if it seeks to make the campus captive, if it treats it primarily as a "missionary territory," or if it judges the academic world for not doing the tasks of the Church. When the Church, in its inescapable zealousness for its mission, so conceives of its task on the campus, it engages corporately in man's primary sin—the attempt to make of itself (or himself) the center of all life. This is the perilous sin of seeking only the Church's objectives in higher education, instead of reinforcing and calling higher education to serve its own unique role and responsibility in the world under God.

However it may be stated, the responsibility of higher education is primarily with respect to the world. And it is here that God calls us to our Christian tasks in higher education. The Christian mission is not provincial; it is to "go into all the world," and it is here that we have the promise of Christ's abiding presence. Three primary tasks of higher education in society, each viewed in its relation to the Christian mission, can be described in order that this concern may be delineated sharply.

¹Philippe Maury, "The Nature of our Christian Responsibility to the University," *A Report of the Consultation of the University Commission*; this was published recently in cooperation with *The Christian Scholar*.

II

The first of the tasks of higher education which emerges from its responsibility to the world is the task of transmitting the cultural heritage. The task of the college or university is, in part at least, to introduce and orient each new generation to the tradition of human culture. It is called upon to explore man's own distinctive work as he searches for the meaning of his humanity, as he attempts to challenge the reality of his death and build that which outlasts it, and as he constructs in his own terms the "measure" by which he conceives the life of man. The academic community, as a channel of transmission, creates and reutilizes the primary symbols by which culture is handed on in the historical succession. As it does so, the college or university is involved inescapably in the transformation of culture. In placing the cultural past at the disposal of the cultural future, the cultural legacy is itself authenticated in the present; and this is, in itself, a way of transforming culture, either enriching it or diminishing it. It is in the responsibility that higher education has in this area that we become aware of the importance of stressing that the academic community must live on "the frontier of culture."

The question for Christians is, of course, whether they can join wholeheartedly in the cultural quest of higher education. The Christian faith insists upon a tenuous ambivalence with respect to human culture, for it both accepts and rejects culture. Culture is not only human and humanistic; it is, even at its best, man's attempt to discover his human life against the total dependence of man upon God. Therefore, saving culture is not a Christian's true business. He must be willing to be called out of culture, to clear the decks and start afresh, when God summons him into a new place and a new age. He is, in New Testament language, "a child of Abraham." Such a name could not be our high calling if our ancient patriarch had been concerned only to save Chaldean culture. However, that which is the concern of culture is also intimately involved in the Christian's confession that Christ is Lord; in Christ the Christian finds not only the truth of God in the midst of man, but he also finds in Him the true image of man in response to God. It is, therefore, the reality of the Incarnation, and not only the oft-repeated challenge of "the crisis of civilization," which calls upon the Christian and the Christian community to engage prophetically, theologically, and humanely in the cultural tasks of higher education. To be sure, Christians will continue to be ambivalent with respect to endorsing the cultural enterprise, but they will, if they are true to their faith in Christ, both listen with a graciousness of spirit to all aspects of this enterprise and contribute humbly their own partial understandings of man's essential humanness as it is revealed to them by God in His Son. In this way, the campus can be the place in which it is possible for the Christian, true to his educational vocation, to affirm that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." Without such a reconciliation of life, such a relatedness of man, he can neither be nor stay fully human.

III

The second of the areas of responsibility which higher education has toward society is that it must demonstrate the reality, and extend the boundaries, of human community. The interrelatedness of man's life, its mutual sharing and interdependence, is inescapably affirmed both by the practical affairs of campus life, regardless of its denial and repeated violations, and by the nature and responsibilities of human knowledge. Community is moreover the premise of Christian faith and life, for to be called into the Christian life by the gift of faith is at the same time an involvement in the corporateness of "the people of God." Yet both higher education and the Christian community participate tragically in a dual contemporary fact. We take part in, and often contribute to, the most telling symbols of our day—the many curtains, iron, paper, racial, etc., which are divisive of human community. And we share in, and often accentuate, a persistent unwillingness to really grapple with the hard reality of man in his basic unity, thereby denying the understanding of man which is possible only as we confront man himself and as we seek to know him through the biblical emphases upon both creation and redemption.

It is often said that the contribution which is truly Christian in higher education is the realization and the challenge of community. This underscores the need that both higher education and the Church must act as though the doors to human community are in fact open, as though the many distinctions, the curtains, and even the antitheses, are not ultimate and final, and as though the interrelatedness of human life which the Christian knows in Christ is also the essential fact for all men, however it may be denied by sin. Courage and confidence are called for in piercing the many separations of our time and in breaking through the curtains which defy community. We cannot lightly dismiss the real distinctions, but we can, through faith in God as the Lord of history, move beyond them. God can use His Church, and He can use the communities of higher learning, to the degree that we are willing to serve Him as the nucleus of a new humanity. Until then, both the Church and the campus face squarely in the wrong direction. And if He can use us, He will demand more of us than we often give or are willing to give. He will demand the practical effecting of the community which he gives us in our classrooms, in our student, faculty, and administration associations, and in the relationships between the Church and the campus. He will demand a more articulate and realistic proclamation of the Gospel of reconciliation in all aspects of the academic life. And he will demand that we work harder at the task of determining what may be judged as an adequate Christian account of human existence.

The call to community on the campus, and its extension into the life of society, is therefore a call which comes practically, in that it challenges the actual effecting of community; it comes volitionally, in that it demands an exercise of the will to break through the all-too-complacently-accepted divisions and dichotomies; and it comes intellectually, in that it confronts us with the need to come to the understanding of man himself. It is frequently the latter of these which, because we deny its

relevance and over-sentimentalize community in terms of love, concern, and sharing, is imperiled by the absence of the Christian's contribution. The Christian, too, has been "ideologized" by the concern for values, by the acceptance of non-human categories for the approach to man, and even by the sole reliance upon so-called biblical terms for the understanding of man. This is why the question Professor Paul Lehman raised at the consultation already referred to is so very important: Have we moved beyond all these to a fresh approach to man himself, to a new form of the humanism of man? Until we are prepared to accept the challenge of this question, we continue to subsume man under categories which distort man, and the foundations of human community in human understanding are not given a secure basis. Then we continue to repeat empty phrases and hollow definitions, and the responsibilities which are ours for extending community and enlarging the human order are denied. The Christian's concern for community among men is therefore a concern which includes practical, volitional, and theological dimensions. And it is a concern which can join fruitfully with the tasks of higher education if its role in society is to be realized.

IV

The third of the areas of responsibility which higher education has toward society is that it must assist creatively and constantly in keeping society "open" with respect to rational thought, free inquiry, and a fundamental trustfulness concerning the work and the results of the human mind. Such openness must be toward knowledge itself—its new areas and new methods. It must extend to the human mind also—to the distinctive role which it is called upon to play in the total context of man's life, its search for truth, its willingness to ask the disturbing questions, its constant inquiry into the assumptions and bases upon which man's life moves forward. This is possible, however, only as the openness is stretched upward and forward—what might be termed the "eschatological bent" of higher education. That is, the freedom which is assumed and called for by openness is a freedom which is derived from the commitment to God and His call into the future; it is the freedom which makes possible the claim that the mind, as part of the whole of life, belongs to God and not to man.

This is especially crucial as a question for us in higher education in America today. Really prophetic forces with respect to all the pressing issues are not in strong evidence in academic circles, especially among students! This is "the silent generation," in whom the inquisitive and radical quest is often missing. It is also a crucial question, however, for our society in which it is increasingly apparent that the concern for being right is less important than the concern for being safe! The call for an open society in America today, despite the greatness of her heritage in this respect, is a call which comes to those who have courage and are willing to take a risk. Even for Christians it comes as a shock that their doctrines of man and the social order are being separated from prophetic judgments and turned instead

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into the support of reaction and political conservatism. Perhaps the importance of the question of the open society comes with most poignant force to Christians in higher education. Identified as they are with religion, it is often assumed that they too must endorse the status quo, and that they are willing to have their identification used only to promote an orthodoxy which turned about is the high regard for order. The Christian community is challenged, therefore, to avoid the "parlor-ing of God" and to treat with uneasiness what is involved in the current vogue for and return to religion. Even its banners may be used to banish God, to minimize judgment and maximize restriction, and to close up society. This is the time for a new offensive for freedom and for a proclamation of the Christian claim that freedom is derived from a commanding loyalty to the true God. This is the time to reiterate the discovery that it is in His service that we find our perfect freedom.

Both higher education and the Christian community always confront two major perils which restrict their responsibility to society. The one is to become bound to the past, absorbed in a static heritage, and engaged only in handing down a heritage intact from the past. The other is to capitulate to the prevailing anxieties, fears, and objectives of the present only, forgetting that there is a foundation upon which the contemporary enterprise is carried forward, and that it is in that foundation—of the search for truth and the service of God—where we derive perspectives for a courageous and creative engagement in the present-day world. We need to rediscover in both the Church and on the campus the kind of freedom which is the basis of the open society and which can come only from a sense of responsibility which is marked by a concern for service. In both campus and Church we have too long dwelt under the illusion that it is our primary task to provide leadership. We tend to close our eyes to the actual fact that we are both often by-passed today and other centers are creative of culture and the social order. Then we follow, saying, "Come, we must go; for are we not their leaders?"

Both the Church and the campus have the unique and distinctive role of *serving* human need, human community, and human society. It is in the willingness to accept this role that we can be faithful to our Lord, and to the purpose with which God has endowed the human mind in its quest for knowledge. And, if we are unwilling—if we are luke-warm, lethargic, complacent, only turned inward upon ourselves—then we have already become irrelevant to our time. While we may still be asked to turn out technicians—even technicians of culture and of religion—we can serve only as the museums of a dead past. God calls us to a higher service, a service in which we can discover our divinely-appointed vocation and our highest freedom.

Books and Publications

Perry Miller and the New England Mind

A REVIEW-ARTICLE

GERHARD T. ALEXIS

The city shall be rebuilt upon its mound. Jeremiah 30:18

Perhaps the most surprising thing about the current lively and productive concern with interpreting the American heritage is that few find it at all surprising. The success of the periodical *American Heritage* is one recent index to the increasing inter-disciplinary interest in finding new answers to Crèvecoeur's old question. But that we have a heritage worthy of being explored was not always so self-evident, the strident voices of the Twenties proclaiming the opposite to be painfully clear. The prestige of the historian, for example, seemed to be in inverse proportion to the extent to which he concentrated on an American past, so that as recently as *The Cambridge History of American Literature* Motley and Prescott glory in a separate chapter, while Parkman finds an obscure place elsewhere among the also-rans. And many a teacher of American literature developed an unplanned back-door approach to American culture in the very effort to enrich the meanings of a literature often considered imitative and commonplace.

Howsoever these things be, we have said a long farewell to the old dismal views of our cultural impoverishment and are enjoying the benefit of penetrating studies by our finest scholars, who are subjecting the American heritage to such a scrutiny as it has never before experienced. We are thus not surprised to find a theologian writing on *The Irony of American History* or an English professor writing exhaustively and exhaustingly on theology in *The New England Mind*.

There has of course been steady, continuing concern with the question of Puritanism, for its early and enduring impact is beyond controversy. Such recognition has not always led to understanding, however, and to many a college student the term either evokes a picture of dour couples parading to a first Thanksgiving (these not-at-all Puritans, passing anachronistic log cabins) or suggests an attitude sternly dedicated to hunting down and destroying all joys in life. Confusion on a more scholarly level, if less naive, has been just as apparent. There has been real need, therefore, for the reinterpretation of Puritanism which has been a significant concern of scholarship over the past three decades. Some studies have attempted superficially to "humanize" the Puritans by demonstrating that they, too, liked their cakes and ale, but more penetrating examinations have dealt with significant relationships of Puritanism to the fine arts, science, philosophy, education, and literature. Its role in the development of democracy has been subjected to both sympathetic and hostile criticism. Surely we are increasingly well prepared properly to evaluate the very mind of Puritanism.

In this attempt at analysis few works have been more uniformly praised (and perhaps less thoroughly read) than the two volumes by Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (1939) and *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* (1953). They constitute the chief pillars in his still uncompleted reconstruction of the edifice of Puritanism. This structure, if unfinished, is impressive, and its outlines have taken sufficient shape over the years to justify an examination into the nature of Perry Miller's New England mind.

First of all, what is implied by the title itself? The geographical designation, we recognize, has no peculiar application: by the New England mind is meant simply the Puritan mind (in America, presumably, but not always so actually). This would have been a happier term which one suspects might have been the title had it not been used already by Herbert Schneider.

More significant is what is meant—and what is not meant—by *mind*. Professor Miller does not intend it to cover the entire range of Puritan interest and activity; time after time he makes clear that he is not writing a comprehensive social history. His work is not the place to turn, therefore, for those interested in the "artistic" mind or the "business" mind or even the "private" mind. The first, except in so far as it relates to principles of rhetoric, is of very little concern to this study; the second, as Bernard Bailyn points out in one of the best of the reviews,¹ ought to be represented simply because, in Miller's own words, "from the end of the seventeenth century down at least to the close of the nineteenth, the history of New England's 'mind' was written as much, if not more, by the actions of merchants and men of business as in the publications of the theologians and politicians."² But it is with these last that Professor Miller is almost exclusively concerned, and the din of the marketplace comes to us through the medium generally of ministerial pronouncements, not invariably a high-fidelity instrument.

Again, the mind "means what was said and done publicly."³ This limitation is entirely comprehensible in the light of Professor Miller's underlying plan, but in almost ruling out the diary and other evidences of the personal devotional life he deprives us of valuable resources which have been central in such enlightening books as William Haller's *The Rise of Puritanism*.

The New England Mind passes very lightly indeed over the majority of the New England people who were not church members at all, excludes from real Puritanism dissidents such as Anne Hutchinson, and resolves itself into the story of the modifications forced upon a particular Puritan importation, covenant theology. It is indeed in terms of the Americanizing process in a broad sense that Miller finds the decline and fall of Puritan orthodoxy of value in understanding the *American* mind.

Wherein then lies the uniqueness of these two massive volumes on the New England mind? The answer seems to involve three basic assumptions by Professor

Miller: that Puritanism can be made intellectually respectable, much more than it has been; that the most complex study of Puritanism can be made to revolve about a key idea or chain of ideas; and that the conflicts centering about such ideas have great and hitherto unsuspected dramatic value.

The first of these propositions might appear self-evident. Anyone even superficially aware of the intellectual structure of Calvinism and familiar with the education of the early colonists would concede it. But Professor Miller is convinced that recent scholarship has overdone Puritan morality and cases of conscience and has correspondingly "tended to minimize the importance of abstract theology," to consider it "no more than an unnecessarily elaborate rationalization." Summing up this difference in emphasis in a masterpiece of understatement, he concludes, "If such a view is entirely correct the story of thought and expression in New England should pass over the abstract ideas more hurriedly than the present work is disposed to do."⁴

His concern with the intellectual content is so pervasive, however, that it throws out of balance his own scheme for the first volume of *The New England Mind*. This plan was to view Puritanism as the fusion of two currents, Augustinian piety and the intellectual heritage. The first two chapters are devoted to the former, and the reader might well assume that Puritan piety was the prerequisite for and the cause of Puritan theology. Augustine's *Confessions*, we are told, contains the inward meaning of all the thousands of Puritan sermons; "the great structure of the Puritan creed [was only] ostensibly erected upon the foundation of logic."⁵ Doctrines central to Calvinism "were not embraced for their logic, but out of a hunger of the human spirit and an anxiety of the soul."⁶

But as the book proceeds piety is made to play an increasingly subordinate role. If the intellectual side of the Puritan is but an adjunct to the piety, it is nevertheless of greater importance from our perspective, Professor Miller declares,⁷ and this is the side of Puritanism to which he devotes the bulk of a volume which to William Sweet has the forbidding format of a government document.⁸ The author develops at length the main outlines of the Ramist logic, which, far from being an adjunct, "molded a whole theology and determined the Puritan way of thinking."⁹ The doctrine of technologia, a reshuffling of medieval scholasticism through the agency of Ramist logic, posits a reasonable universe to which knowledge, not the devotional life, is the key. Although Professor Miller bases Puritan thought in the main on sixteenth-century Protestantism, he so emphasizes the humanistic and rationalistic elements that the very tools of the early reformers become ancillary.

Every theologian in New England thereafter found occasion to expound the coincidence of natural law or the law of reason with the law promulgated on Sinai, until there are times when the reader wonders whether Puritans had not come to regard Biblical dispensation as a corroboration to the conclusions of reason rather than the one true and perfect revelation.¹⁰

The faith of the Puritan becomes "an exercise under divine guidance of invention and judgment, perception and reason, sapience and, above all, prudence."¹¹ His

tools are logic, physics, psychology, and rhetoric, which combine to interpret God's word and formulate a covenant system held to be quite different from original Calvinism.

There is no doubt that we are vastly indebted to Professor Miller's profound scholarship for a much better understanding of the roots of Puritanism and the range and strenuousness of its intellect. Nevertheless the focus of the picture has become blurred, as the writer himself admits toward the end of the first volume.

At this point I have become belatedly conscious that the procedure has consistently created one impression which was not provisioned and which is far from being historically accurate, for each remove in the presentation has carried us a step further from the heart of the piety. . . . For we must remember that from the very authors . . . who insisted most alarmingly upon the limitations of God in the Covenant of Grace . . . Could also be extracted a series of quotations freely and truthfully expressing the piety without a mention of the covenants.¹²

Such assurances do not, however, restore the balance. There is in fact no balance at all. And one may easily see, by reference to a single figure, that for Professor Miller the case for Puritanism rests chiefly and perhaps solely on our realizing that, while their inherited beliefs were pretty hopeless, Puritans could have minds capable of assimilating and using the most advanced intellectual, and preferably scientific, concepts. The figure is Jonathan Edwards, whose story is in effect an extended footnote to the second volume of *The New England Mind*.

Writing in 1940, Professor Miller described Jonathan Edwards as dangerously near mysticism and pantheism, saved only by the retention of orthodox safeguards. But both mysticism and pantheism, while heresies to Puritanism, could arise from its premises. "There was in Puritanism a piety, a religious passion, the sense of an inward communication and of the divine symbolism of nature. One side of the Puritan nature hungered for these excitements." In this writing Puritan piety does not become an ethic until Chauncy's protest against the Great Awakening; as for Edwards himself, filled with the insight that the world was filled with the joy of God, "he turned to combat the rationalism of Boston, to argue that man cannot live by Newtonian schemes and mathematical calculations, but only by surrender to the will of God."¹³ But by 1949 the awkward picture of the greatest Puritan running counter to Puritan rationalism was erased, and the study of Jonathan Edwards in the American Men of Letters Series makes him out an advanced student of Locke and Newton, a student, in fact, who went far beyond his masters. In the process the mystical side suffers considerably. Saddled with "a primitive religious conception," he had insights into science and psychology which were ahead of his time and of ours. To interpret "A Divine and Supernatural Light" as mysticism is to lose its point; to call Edwards a mystic is "utterly incorrect."¹⁴ Practically every line this "apotheosis of Puritanism" wrote is explicable in terms of Lockean psychology and Newtonian law. This is true even of the utterly conventional and orthodox *History of Redemption*, and as for Edwards's luminous "Personal Narrative," it gets hardly a mention except that it

constituted an admission that his traditional stages of conversion were not satisfactory!

A weakness allied to Professor Miller's over-stress on the intellectual is his very simplification of it. This may seem paradoxical enough to anyone who has struggled with the weight of erudition in *The New England Mind* (most professors of American literature know the books, but few are ready to discuss them). Yet with an ingenuity truly remarkable Professor Miller finds always a central idea or clash about which each study revolves. The first volume is in effect a study of the rationale of federalism, which becomes the unique characteristic of the New England mind. Properly speaking, it is not a study of the New England mind at all; it is a detailed picture of the covenant theology as it came from England, a static importation. If the covenant scheme were the essence of the New England mind, it would be hard to see Edwards, who rejected the federal theology, as "the quintessence of Puritanism." Nor can Edwards himself be reduced to the interweaving of Locke and Newton.

The same process of simplification is discernible in *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, which constitutes a kind of *Götterdämmerung*, with the Mathers, representing the Old Guard, surrendering one by one the ramparts of the inherited city on the hill. The book is, for most students of American culture, far more useful than the earlier volume, and this is not merely because it is easier reading. If *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* had little that was distinctively American, the companion volume has much. Indeed, Professor Miller argues for the book that its chief value lies in its "representative" quality, with the adjustments of Puritanism to the native scene constituting a kind of laboratory experiment in the study of the American experience. And certainly in the book we have concepts and people, in a succession of struggles enacted in space and time.

The New England Mind: From Colony to Province continues the account where Miller's earlier *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts* left off. In chronological sequence, with some overlapping, it traces the many adjustments which the American experience forced upon the imported federal theology, not all of which were conscious, but none of which lacked drama.

The interplay of received doctrine and colonial actuality, as traced by Professor Miller, leads frequently to new interpretations of American pronouncements and of early American literature in general. The gap between covenant hopes and observable realities led to the jeremiad, "the one literary type which the first native-born Americans inevitably developed."¹⁵ Increase Mather's *Illustrious Providences* becomes, not a collection of scientific or pseudo-scientific curiosities, but an attempt to support the crumbling edifice of the covenant by showing that God's will still prevailed, at least in particulars.¹⁶ Cotton Mather's *Essays to Do Good* is viewed as an indication of a new pietism in which social pressures replace the power of the pulpit. Bulkeley, Wise, James Franklin, Colman, Stoddard,

and scores of others have leading roles or bit parts made significant by their relation to the extended drama of the expiring covenant.

The author denies that he is writing a popular book (What scholar would ever admit it?), but the method and style are such as to appeal to a wider public than the first volume found. The relating of a succession of skirmishes or (sometimes) pitched battles would make theological controversy lively enough for anyone. There is a good deal of humor. There are references to topics that were recently live issues, such as McCarthyism, but these will hardly prove of enduring value to the book. Occasionally there are even poetic touches, such as the conjecture as to "what Stoddard's grandson and successor might do, Stoddard being dead, out there in the Valley."¹⁷

The dramatic elements are not always convincing, of course. There are too many "first's"; too often, at some obscure moment, "All of a sudden . . . the New England mind found itself . . . entangled in contradictions."¹⁸ Nor is it always clear why the American experience was what it was: why, for example, did advances in scientific knowledge cause no perturbation in seventeenth-century New England while leading frequently to much consternation back in England, even John Donne saying of the new cosmology, "And new Philosophy calls all in doubt," with "all cohaerence gone"?

But coherence is not gone from Professor Miller's study; it never is. If we once grant that the distinguishing mark of New England Puritanism was the covenant theology and the subsequent declension of that covenant system was the adjustment of Puritanism to the New World, all sorts of seemingly disparate elements fall into place. From a farewell exhortation by Richard Mather to the funeral sermon preached over his son Increase almost seventy years later the pages of history are bound together by the covenant story. This is the common denominator to explain factions among the clergy: the Mathers and Stoddard, or the Mathers and the Harvard liberals. It is the key to the reception of the new charter, to the shift from intolerance to tolerance, to the gradual adjustment to a reasonable society of business and science. It derives new meanings from the familiar accounts of the witchcraft craze and the bitter struggle over smallpox inoculation. The total picture of *The New England Mind: From Colony to Province* is not far removed from the social history which the author disclaimed any intention of writing. Certainly for its wide range of information and richly suggestive interpretations all students of Puritanism will remain indebted to Professor Miller.

Together, the two volumes of *The New England Mind* will be found on the bookshelves of everyone to whom the origins and development of the American mind present a pervasive and engrossing challenge. And yet these books, massive, scholarly, and exciting, will not satisfy us as a final word on Puritanism. The covenant modification did not divert New England Puritanism from the main stream of Calvinism, Professors Morison and Miller to the contrary, and the insistent stress on the structure and eventual decline of the covenant system is in effect a

distortion or at the best a partial picture of Puritanism even of the New England variety. The central purpose of Puritanism is obscured, that effort, as Professor Miller has elsewhere most aptly put it, "to bring men face to face with what Puritanism always demands that they face, the divinity of divinity."¹⁰

A similar lack of balance obtains in connection with the relationship of piety and the intellect. One must be impressed by the far-stretched greatness of Puritan learning and speculation about the order of the universe and man's place in it. Once and for all Professor Miller has demonstrated that Puritanism has a mind. He may have forgotten its heart.

NOTES

¹*New England Quarterly*, XXVII (March, 1954), 112-118.

²*The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, p. 489.

³*Ibid.*, x.

⁴*The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, p. 47.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁸*Journal of Religion*, XX (July, 1940), 292.

⁹*The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, p. 141.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 199.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 201.

¹²*Ibid.*, pp. 484-485.

¹³"Jonathan Edwards to Emerson," *New England Quarterly*, XIII (December, 1940), 599, 605.

¹⁴*Jonathan Edwards* (New York, 1949), pp. 68, 193.

¹⁵*The New England Mind: From Colony to Province*, p. 29.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 144. And the heart of Calef's *More Wonders of the Invisible World* is its attack upon the covenant.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 416.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 363.

¹⁹*Jonathan Edwards*, p. 194.

Religion and Freedom of Thought. By Perry Miller, Robert L. Calhoun, Nathan M. Pusey, and Reinhold Niebuhr. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1954. 64 pages. \$1.00.

This booklet of about sixty pages contains four addresses given at Union Theological Seminary during the bicentennial of the founding of Columbia University. Perry Miller points out that the early churches were often exclusive and intolerant. As denominations and sciences multiplied, freedom became a necessity. The question is raised whether the churches can take credit for freedom of the mind or have merely "stumbled into it." He seems to imply that the latter took place.

In discussing the historical relations between religion and freedom of the mind, Robert L. Calhoun points out that both intellectual freedom and religion are rooted in man's very nature. Both are indispensable for the growth of persons.

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Much of the opposition to freedom has come from social conservatism, anti-rationalism, and political rivalry. This is the case even when religious grounds are given. Religious communities have fostered the liberation and growth of the Western mind through their universities, monastic schools, and other institutions. Organized religion, it is to be hoped, will make common cause with mature intellectual inquiry.

Mr. Pusey discusses the threats to freedom of thought and points out how, in times of turmoil, passion tends to replace reason. The task of the university is to "set minds free." Our failures have been due largely to an excessive preoccupation with some single avenue to truth. Freedom is a goal of education, but this goal is not likely to be reached without an understanding and experience of vital religion.

In the concluding essay Reinhold Niebuhr contends that man is the kind of creature who cannot be whole unless he be committed. The freedom or the emancipation of the self requires commitment to a center beyond himself. The secular, political religions have developed to fill the emptiness of uncommitted lives. Two problems are considered: how to prevent religious commitment from being too restrictive, and how to establish community embracing persons who have different religious loyalties. Men too readily absolutize their partial values and interests. Men need humility, charity, and tolerance, if they are to establish community. They also need freedom so that they may challenge corruptions. A stimulating booklet of about sixty pages.

HAROLD H. TITUS

A Democratic Manifesto. By Samuel Enoch Stumpf. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1954. 166 pages. \$2.75.

It is altogether fitting that a "democratic manifesto" be a good deal less pretentious and aggressive in tone than *The Communist Manifesto*. This particular restatement is not only modest itself, but makes the very relevant point that Western democracy, caught by the Communist challenge with its heritage uncertain and diluted, has much to be modest about.

Mr. Stumpf is professor of philosophy and lecturer in law at Vanderbilt University, and his book is composed of a series of lectures delivered to college students a few years ago. Thus his intent is "simply to restate some important aspects of democracy and to indicate the creative relation of religion to democratic philosophy." His procedure is to define democracy in terms of its "basic faith" (its assumptions about man and his destiny), its expression in political organization, and its attempts as a "moral enterprise" to realize its values in the broader social and economic context of politics. In his last chapters he attempts a survey of "the cumulative heritage of democracy" and discusses love and its alternatives as motives of democratic man.

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Inevitably, many readers who share Professor Stumpf's general orientation will want to question some of the emphases and generalizations made in the political-historical sections of his analysis. Political democracy, for instance, is defined in so fragmentary a manner as to be almost misleading: the "rule of law" is manifestly one central element, but the addition of the "separation of powers" is certainly inadequate to complete the concept and is not, at least in its technical sense, really an essential feature of a democratic system. Again, the historical survey of the sources of democratic ideas seems more selective and sketchy than might have been achieved in even a short chapter. But of course most of the limitations of the book on this level are self-imposed and grow out of the intent and background of the book itself.

Professor Stumpf is at his best where he is needed most: in pointing up clearly and incisively that democracy rests, in both logic and history, on a particular view of human nature, and that certain qualities of human character and motivation are necessary conditions to its maintenance. Society can organize itself for the achievement of freedom and equality only insofar as its citizens understand both man's dignity and his corruptibility, accept moral responsibility, and are able to act from motives of love rather than fear, self-interest and desire. It is principally the Judeo-Christian tradition which has nourished these necessary beliefs in the West, and insofar as we reject this heritage our body politic loses its health. Professor Stumpf cites convincing evidence (most interestingly in the area of legal philosophy) that we are at least uncertain and confused on fundamentals. It is clear that the Communists have no monopoly on materialism, determinism, moral relativism; these are widespread, powerful, often controlling beliefs in the West also. Professor Stumpf's analysis on this crucial point is sound and illuminating, his implied warning all too relevant.

HARRY R. DAVIS,

The Philosophy of College and University Religious Work of The Methodist Church. Nashville: Division of Educational Institutions of the Board of Education of The Methodist Church, 1955. 20 pages. \$.10.

Probably the most significant act of the five year old organization of Methodist professional college and university workers was the adoption at the Nashville session, November 1, 1954, of the philosophy report. One of the first acts of the executive committee of the newly formed Methodist Student Workers Association in 1949 was the appointment of a national committee on philosophy. This committee brought a preliminary report to the Dallas meeting in 1951 and a much more extensive treatise to the Ecumenical Workshop at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, in 1953.

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There was thorough discussion and much creative interchange of ideas among professional workers on both occasions, but it was felt that still broader consideration was needed. A new committee then prepared a study outline with bibliography for submission to the Counselors' Seminars at each of the six Regional Leadership Training Conferences of the Methodist Student Movement in the summer of 1954. Each of these six groups of professional workers spent a week with the study outlines and reported back to the central committee. The philosophy report prepared by that committee for submission to the national meeting at Nashville was almost completely rewritten by that group during its five days together. Adequate representation from all of the groups which had worked on the report over the five year period was present when it was submitted for final adoption, and there were no dissenting votes. Subsequently, on January 12, 1955, it was adopted by the Division of Educational Institutions of the General Board of Education of The Methodist Church.

This writer feels that the significance of this philosophy lies as much in the grass roots method by which it was prepared as in its content, as important for a proper understanding of our mission as that is. It is not a directive from on high but a product of our experience and reflection in the field.

While this philosophy has been prepared by and for workers in The Methodist Church, most of it is relevant to the work of any evangelical Christian group in the university. The following abridgment presents sections I and II in their entirety, with only summary parts from sections III and IV. The Preface and the Appendix are omitted. The complete report is available on request from the Department of College and University Religious Life, P. O. Box 871, Nashville 2, Tennessee.

I. A THEOLOGICAL AFFIRMATION

The basis of a philosophy of the college and university religious movement of The Methodist Church is the affirmation:

That God is creator and sustainer of life, whose purpose orders nature and the universe, whose will is fulfilled in law and love. He is Father of mankind, having imparted to man his own spirit to be fulfilled in worship, obedience, and self-sacrificing service in his Kingdom;

That Jesus Christ is Son of God and Son of Man through whom the Father's unfailling grace and redeeming love are mediated in time—past, present, and future;

That the Holy Spirit is the personal presence of God in our lives, who wills to reconcile men to himself, acting in history, creating, judging and redeeming as proclaimed by the Scriptures and affirmed in the fellowship of the Church;

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That the Church is the body of Christ, that where two or three are gathered in his name, there is the Church in essence.

Because of the Gospel, the campus Christian group is called upon to bear its missionary and prophetic witness to the Christ in the university, the Church, and the world. To this end the college and university religious movement of The Methodist Church establishes campus units to study, worship, and work, in order to fulfill its mission of fostering a campus Christian community.

II. BASIC PRINCIPLES

There are certain presuppositions or principles which both express the *raison d'être* of the college and university religious movement and illumine its nature and which are logically prior to any statement of objectives. Among these we accept as valid the following:

1. The university has major influence in creating and transforming cultural patterns and does not merely reflect them. The search for truth is its vocation, and the sharing of that discovered truth is a major function.
2. The university is an intellectually determined community, as well as a geographic one, and ideas are more influential there than in society in general. The beginnings of a creative transformation of culture are thus to be hoped for in the university community.
3. The university is composed of persons in interaction; the faculty is never apart from the student or the administration; all are at least potentially involved in the total creative process.
4. Insofar as these persons are able to make significant contributions at any level in the university community, they become adults living in an adult world; maturing or matured, they face adult responsibilities.
5. The nature of the Christian gospel compels the Church to witness in the university to the truth that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, creating, transforming and redeeming.
6. Because the Universal Church, the Body of Christ, is divided in its visible forms, any particular witness must be understood as a partial one.
7. The Methodist Church is compelled both by its historic concern for higher education and by its basic philosophy to share in the witness in the university. It is the total Methodist Church which is responsible for this witness rather than any one congregation.
8. Individuals in the university community are not detached minds but whole persons, therefore, the Church with all its ministries must be at work among them.

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The Church must go where they are and not merely invite them to come where it is; ours is a total ministry to the total university community as well as to persons within it.

9. Each university community is in some sense unique just as are the persons at work within it, and therefore no one pattern of organization can be formulated for all. A freedom to experiment, change and grow is basic to the philosophy of the college and university religious movement of The Methodist Church.

10. The college and university religious movement of The Methodist Church embraces all efforts of Methodism to witness in and through the university, seeking to achieve the highest qualitative level of effectiveness and faithfulness.

III. THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The general objectives of the college and university religious movement of The Methodist Church are:

1. To lead all members of the college and university community to accept the Christian faith in God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—according to the Scriptures, and to live as true disciples of Jesus Christ . . .

2. To deepen among students and faculty an understanding, a knowledge, and a love of the Bible as the Christian's guidebook of faith . . .

3. To deepen, enrich and mature the Christian faith of college and university men and women . . .

4. To witness in the campus community to the mission, message and life of the Church . . .

5. To develop local campus fellowships which are warm, loving, forgiving, and deeply committed to Christ, and in which students and faculty can mutually strengthen one another in Christian thinking and living . . .

6. To develop ecumenical understanding and a united witness among students and faculty, individually and in campus groups . . .

7. To foster a plan of Christian education aimed at the transformation of persons in Christ . . .

8. To challenge students to a commitment of self, possessions and service—a conscious experience of Christian stewardship . . .

9. To interpret Christian vocation as the individual's total response to the will and purpose of God . . .

10. To interpret the religious life of the college and university as an integral part of the program of higher education . . .

11. To consider that in all the efforts of the college and university religious movement of The Methodist Church the campus is one community . . .

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12. To promote on the campus a Christian concern for the world community.
13. To seek the establishment of justice and social righteousness upon the earth . . .
14. To create those experiences of fellowship, social activity, and recreation which reflect the highest Christian values . . .
15. To witness to the truth of the gospel by integrity of program, structure and life . . .
16. To win the campus community to Christ. The evangelism of the campus Christian movement must be relevant to campus experience . . .

IV. THE CHURCH'S APPROACH TO THE CAMPUS

The Church is called by Christ, its head, to minister to the redeemed and to redeem the lost wherever they may be found. It is at the core of our faith that we seek out those who need our ministry—even as Wesley and others preached in fields and mines in the birthday of Methodism—rather than wait for them to come to us where we are wont to worship. The modern college or university campus, which is often a secular community both in philosophy and action, constitutes a fertile field for the Church's ministry in both categories.

The college and university religious movement of The Methodist Church in its ministry to those within the campus Christian community is The Methodist Church at work on the campus, undergirded by the prayers, the financial support, and the heartfelt blessing of the total church at every level.

The administration of the sacraments and the preaching and teaching of the Word are the life of that fellowship on the campus. Such a ministry will express itself in counseling, Christian fellowship, discussion of vital issues, recruitment for church personnel, participation in projects of service, and the development of worship and devotional life . . .

Directors of religious life, college chaplains, ministers of campus churches, Wesley Foundation directors, and other campus workers are university pastors to the Methodists on the campus and, in cooperation with the workers from other groups, are God's ministers responsible for the spiritual welfare of the total college or university community. They are not thereby cut off from The Methodist Church as leaders of a separate movement, but are called of God as ministers of that Church in this specialized community; the college and university religious movement is within and therefore is a part of, not apart from, The Methodist Church . . .

On many campuses the work of the Church is much the same as that of a "mission station." It witnesses to the Christian faith amidst a people confronted by the live options of many other faiths, including such modern paganisms as

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humanism, scientism, and logical positivism. In such a setting a strategic task becomes one of winning the leaders and altering the climate, so the Gospel may be preached and sinners called to repentance in a less hostile environment. Evangelism thus becomes the task of transforming the basic campus philosophy and of winning the persons whose lives are set in this environment.

Higher education by itself has failed to provide men with an integrative factor for all their facts and knowledge, and likewise it has failed to stimulate dynamic loyalties to self-transcending values—intellectual, moral or spiritual. The Church insists the educational experience is more than the acquisition of knowledge and skills, that it deals properly with evaluation and commitments—with the transformation of persons as well as the enlightenment of minds. This means that ideally religion is recognized by the administration and faculty as a valid part of the total process of higher education, as curricular as well as extracurricular. No unit outside the university community could hope for that recognition, so the college and university religious movement becomes not merely possible and logical in the life of the Church, but vital and essential to the accomplishment of its calling with respect to the university community . . .

GLEN OTIS MARTIN

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF SPECIAL INTEREST

The Association of American Colleges Bulletin for March (Volume XLI, Number 1, pp. 88-97) presented an excellent review of the "Faculty Christian Movement in the United States." This was prepared by Dr. Rene de Visme Williamson, Professor of Government, Louisiana State University. It was first presented as an address at the annual meetings of the A. A. C., in Washington, D. C., in January. Professor Williamson is a particularly competent person for the presentation of this review. He has been a member of the Executive Committee of the Faculty Christian Fellowship for the past two years, and last year he was given a leave of absence from his teaching (then at the University of Tennessee) for three months to join the staff of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. Under the auspices of this Board he traveled to more than twenty campuses, most of them throughout the South, to meet with professors and professors' groups, stimulating the Faculty Christian Movement. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. plans to continue and extend its efforts in this direction during the next several years.

Our readers will also be interested to know that the April, 1955, issue of *Phi Delta Kappan* (Volume XXXVI, Number 7) is devoted wholly to "Religion in Education." This journal reports that the interest in religion among educators is second only to the broad field of the teacher himself, thus substantiating further the assertions made by Professor Williamson in his article.

The problem which appears to be foremost in both of these recent publications—as examples of what is currently taking place—is that of translating the Christian foundations of education into the class room, the great problems of educational philosophy, of school administration, and of curriculum construction. More than lip-service to “moral and spiritual values” is needed for sound education and for an active role of Christian perspectives among educators. There is hope that present thinking and action reach to the deeper levels which are called for in the response to current needs.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS SECTION

Dr. Gerhard T. Alexis is Associate Professor of English at Gustavus Adolphus College. He is currently president of the American Studies Group of Minnesota and the Dakotas of the American Studies Association.

Dr. Harry R. Davis is Assistant Professor of Government at Beloit College.

Dr. Glen Otis Martin is Director of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Tennessee and President of the Methodist Student Workers Association.

Dr. Harold H. Titus is Senior Professor of Philosophy at Denison University. He is currently on leave of absence to devote a semester to special work and traveling, on behalf of his institution, the Baptist Board of Education of the American Baptist Convention, and the Faculty Christian Fellowship, in regard to the problems of intellectual freedom.

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Reports and Notices

Annual Commission Meetings

"Growth" and "responsibility" are the key words in describing the life of the Commission on Christian Higher Education to date. The Commission met in February in Cincinnati in connection with the annual meetings of the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of which it is a part. There the Commission took a good look not only at its own growth but also at its responsibilities for the future.

It was immediately apparent that real progress has been made. Meaningful activities are going on in nearly every area of the Commission's life. And they are more than just "busy work." The agencies to which the Commission stands *in loco parentis* are seriously going about the implementation of their various purposes, and occasional glints of achievement give proof of their responsible handling of their assignments.

For example, *The Christian Scholar* finds increasing acceptance. Although circulation continues to run below the ideal goal, its growing subscription list testifies to a wider reading public, and its increasing recognition by faculty members, administrators and college and university religious staff members hints at its wider use as a resource for considering many of the central issues of Christianity and higher education. In an area where only a very limited amount of deep and theologically-oriented thought has been carried on in the past, the *Scholar* is making itself felt.

The Commission's efforts on behalf of faculty people, in addition to the real service represented by the material

between the covers of *The Christian Scholar*, have blossomed in two directions. In one area, small but significant, there have come about consultations for theological faculties through the good offices of the Interseminary Committee. This Committee has recently elected Dean Liston Pope of Yale to be its Chairman, and ably represents the ecumenical cause as it develops this concern between seminary students and faculty of many varied traditions.

Secondly, the Faculty Christian Fellowship has found direction and impetus through its new membership program. An attractively printed folder describing the Fellowship and containing an invitation to membership has been exhausted in its first printing and gone into a second. A newly published *Guide*, written by J. Edward Dirks, is finding a ready acceptance. And the "grass-roots" demand for such an organization is increasing with six regional or state-wide consultations in progress during the Spring term, to say nothing of a host of local campus consultations of faculty.

Dr. Harold Titus, on leave from Denison University for the Spring semester, conducted twenty-one such meetings in as many colleges in the Middle West. In addition, the F.C.F. hopes shortly to announce the securing of a full-time Executive who will serve the organizational needs and provide the kinds of administrative services the growing Fellowship needs.

Like the F.C.F., the United Student Christian Council finds its relationship to the Commission through the De-

partment of Campus Christian Life. U.S.C.C., now in its thirteenth year, is rising above the difficulties (both financial and psychological) which beset it at the time of its entrance into the National Council as a related movement. It made great contributions to the student Christian movements of the country through its graduate and undergraduate conferences in connection with the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches. Its study program is being re-examined, and in the interim publication of study materials has increased over the past year. The U.S.C.C. represents the very basic concern of the student Christian movement of America to work together for the development of Christian unity. The program is deeprooted in a biblical, theological, Protestant faith.

As the U.S.C.C. completes its second year within the Commission, another member of the Commission family has drawn closer to the U.S.C.C., even to the point of taking on an organizational relationship. This is the Student Volunteer Movement with its historic concern for national and world missions and a growing emphasis upon the mission of the Church coupled with a broadening understanding of Christian vocation. The mutual decision by which S.V.M. became the Commission on World Mission of U.S.C.C. bears witness to this developing unity. Simultaneously, the U.S.C.C. adopted the forthcoming 17th Quadrennial Conference of the S.V.M., set for the 1955 Christmas holidays at Athens, Ohio, as its own. This meeting seeks 3,000 students, half of them persons from over-

seas now studying in this country, to consider its theme: "Revolution and Reconciliation."

Tying together some of the Commission's broad concerns for the totality of the higher educational scene are the widening activities of the Department of Campus Christian Life. The committees of the D.C.C.L. are engaged in the effort to bear the Christian witness *within* the University community, and to develop a total strategy for the *whole* higher educational world. In the discharge of this responsibility, the Department is concerned not only with the provision of "administrative services" to its F.C.F. and U.S.C.C. program arms, but with the development of unitive interdenominational and interagency programs in local campus situations. Twenty-three such local projects are now in operation. Through its newly reprinted *Manual for Local Cooperative Student Christian Work* (scheduled for major revision following a summer conference of local cooperative project directors) and through a recent revision of "The Small College Proposals" for one united voluntary Christian student organization on the small college campus, the D.C.C.L. provides major guidance for local cooperative work.

As a part of the Joint Department on Christian Vocation, the Department of the Ministry is included in the Commission along with the Student Volunteer Movement. This Department is bringing about a much closer correlation of the various denominational vocational and ministerial recruitment programs, and is opening up new avenues of con-

tact with the many secular agencies now at work in this and related areas. Among its major current activities are projects to provide a conference on the use of psychological tests in counseling for Church vocations growing out of its work in this area during the past year, the development of shared recruitment materials between the participating denominations, and the production of a hard-backed book to guide young persons planning for the Protestant ministry.

The Commission's Department of Christian Institutions, with its real concern for the Protestant church-related colleges and universities, has made great progress and is perhaps most familiar to the general public of all Commission's varied program units. Its three year study, *What is a Christian College?*, climaxed in the Denison Convocation in June of 1954, was reported in the autumn *Supplement* to *The Christian*

Scholar. A second major research-study effort on *A Strategy for the Protestant Christian Colleges* is projected for the future. While this Department has not had its own Executive, the General Director of the Commission has carried on its work within the life of the Commission.

In the interim between the leadership of Dr. Raymond McLain and the coming of a new General Director, the Commission is being administered by Dr. Gerald Knoff, Executive Secretary of the National Council's Division of Christian Education. The Commission's executive staff now includes: J. Edward Dirks, *The Christian Scholar*; Richard Heaton, Interseminary Committee; Elmer Million, Department of the Ministry; Newton Thurber, William Keys, Ruth Harris and Paul Converse, Student Volunteer Movement; Herluf Jensen, United Student Christian Council; and David Sageser, Department of Campus Christian Life.

Dr. McLain's New Position

On January 1, 1955, Dr. Raymond F. McLain assumed his new position as President of the American University at Cairo, Egypt. Dr. McLain brings to this new position, which is filled with many challenges in the present world situation and in higher education, his background in college administration, his far-sighted leadership of the Commission on Christian Higher Education during its early and most formative years, and his keen sensitivities as a

Christian in the world of higher education. He was, in actuality, the founder of *The Christian Scholar*, and its guide for editorial policy, format, and perspectives during the period of its establishment.

We want to join many others in wishing Dr. and Mrs. McLain well in their new work abroad. The best way of extending our greetings is to present here the "Resolution of appreciation to Dr. McLain" which was adopted

by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches, when it met in Boston, Massachusetts, November 29-30, and December 1, 1954. This resolution was prepared by a special committee of which Dr. H. D. Bollinger was chairman. It reads as follows:

"It is with profound regret that we learn of the resignation of Dr. Raymond F. McLain as the Associate Executive Secretary of the Division. Challenged by the unique and highly significant opportunities offered in the Middle East, he has accepted the presidency of the American University in Cairo, Egypt.

"Dr. McLain brought to the Commission on Christian Higher Education the valuable experience of a church college president. He served as the president of Eureka College, Eureka, Illinois, and of Transylvania College, Lexington, Kentucky. While president of Transylvania College, Dr. McLain was chairman of a committee which did research for the Commission on Christian Higher Education and, on behalf of the Association of American Colleges, initiated a study on 'What is a Christian College?' There were approximately two hundred and fifty church colleges, Protestant and Catholic, participating in the research program.

"That study emphasized the value of the plan for a quadrennial meeting of representatives of Christian colleges, the first of which was held under Dr. McLain's direction at Denison University, Granville, Ohio, in June, 1954.

"Dr. McLain has given us a loftier conception of the nature and purpose of our colleges. He has emphasized the

necessity of sound scholarship. He has reminded us that our colleges must fulfill their role in the total Christian mission of the church.

"Dr. McLain became Associate Executive Secretary of the Division of Christian Education on September 1, 1951. The Denver Assembly marked the first full year of the operation of the Commission on Christian Higher Education. During the two years, the structure of the Commission was completed, its program outlined, and its work developed. It carries on the former work of the National Protestant Council on Higher Education, the Commission on the Ministry, the United Student Christian Council, the Student Volunteer Movement, and the Inter-seminary Committee. The bringing together of these agencies into one Commission in itself was a gigantic undertaking, but Dr. McLain was equal to the task and consummated the work with a statesmanship and vision rarely excelled. The Commission under his leadership became much more than an amalgamation of agencies representing specialized services. It became that aspect of the National Council which, in a most effective manner, represents the unity and oneness of the Christian witness in higher education. Dr. McLain has on all occasions kept this clear.

"Within the term of his leadership, Dr. McLain has been called to a particular responsibility in relation to the program of religion at the colleges and universities, especially with reference to the faculty and to the student Christian enterprise. This was true in the relationship of the Student Volun-

teer Movement to the National Council but in a much more specialized way of the United Student Christian Council. This latter organization, representative of practically all the Protestant student Christian agencies, familiarly known as the U.S.C.C., voted at first not to hold a close working relationship with the National Council. With consummate skill, almost infinite patience, and statesmanlike leadership, Dr. McLain held steady and, through multiplied consultations and committee meetings, waited until tensions were resolved and misunderstandings cleared. At the proper moment, with the vision of a great Christian leader, he called attention to the fact that the campus community is one community and should be approached as such. It was his genius that suggested the real nature of the presently organized Department of Campus Christian Life of the Commission, with its united Christian witness to the campus in terms of administration, faculty, and students. Already, under his leadership, the Faculty Christian Fellowship has developed, and the 'dotted line' or working relationship of the U.S.C.C. has been established.

"In connection with all these developments, there is one other exceptional and outstanding contribution that Dr.

McLain made during his term of service. The Faculty Christian Fellowship is by no means the work of one man. It is a movement that bears the mark of simultaneity born of a new spiritual witness springing up among faculty men everywhere. However, Dr. McLain in the early days saw that, if this spontaneous movement of Christian intellectuals was to be given organizational form, it must have a vehicle of understanding second to none. We will be forever indebted to him for the establishment of the magazine, *The Christian Scholar*, the forum of whose pages discusses the tenets of the Christian faith in relevance to the disciplines, ideas, and fellowship of faculty people. Much more than this, *The Christian Scholar* has become on this high intellectual level the magazine of the Commission on Christian Higher Education.

"We could not bid godspeed to Raymond McLain without expressing the greatest appreciation for his warmth of spirit, the breadth of his imaginative vision, and the consecrated depth of his spirit. We will miss him in the work of the Commission and in this Division. May God continue to richly bless him in his new field of service."

Montreat Faculty Conference

The Rev. Dr. George A. Buttrick, dean of the chapel at Harvard University, will be keynote speaker at the second Faculty Conference on Religion and Higher Education at Montreat,

North Carolina, August 26-30, sponsors of the meeting have announced. He will deliver five addresses on the theme "Christian Faith and the Crisis of Today."

Dr. Kenneth Foreman, professor of systematic theology, Louisville Theological Seminary, will deliver five lectures on "Theology and Education."

Sponsored by the boards of education of The Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church, U. S., the conference will bring together college teachers representing various disciplines to consider how the Christian faith relates to their vocations. Program chairmen for the conference are Dr. Richard N. Bender, secretary, Religion in Higher Education, for the Methodist Board, and Dr. Hunter Blakely, secretary, Division of Higher Education, of the Presbyterian board.

A feature of the program will be

some faculty papers on the theme "Christianity Applied to the Academic Scene." These papers will deal with the future of the Faculty Christian Fellowship, the Christian teacher's responsibility to prepare himself for Christian teaching, the Christian professor's responsibility to his colleagues, and the Christian professor's relation to the community at large.

Seminars on how to relate the Christian faith to academic disciplines will highlight the afternoon sessions. Leaders of these sessions will include Dr. Marius Blesi, Emory and Henry College; Dr. Esther M. Jackson, Clark College; Dr. Robert A. Brent, Wofford College; and Dr. Harold Guest, Baker University.

Workshop in Fund Raising

The School of Education of Syracuse University will offer a two-week workshop in fund raising at its Chautauqua Center, Chautauqua, New York, during the summer session, from July 11 through July 22.

The workshop is especially designed for college and university administrators who are directly or indirectly concerned in the development of college and university resources. The course will cover the various policies and techniques involved in capital gifts campaigns, alumni funds, bequest programs, and long-term development. It is a non-credit course.

The workshop will be directed by

Bernard P. Taylor, executive director of the Penn State Foundation of the Pennsylvania State University. He will be assisted by professional consultants in fund raising and printing. This will be the eighth year that Mr. Taylor has conducted the workshop. During this period more than one hundred and twenty colleges and universities have been represented by their presidents, fund directors, alumni secretaries, or other public relation officials.

Inquiries about the workshop should be addressed to: The Coordinator, Chautauqua Center of Syracuse University, 108 Maxwell Hall, Syracuse, New York.